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PUNK PLANET

MAGAZINE

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issue #41 • February 2001

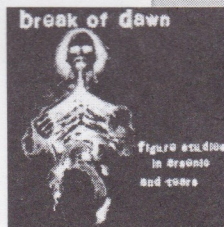
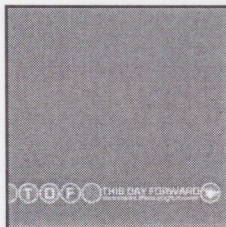
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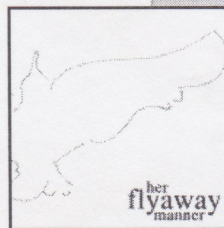


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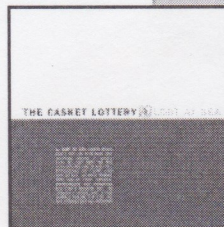
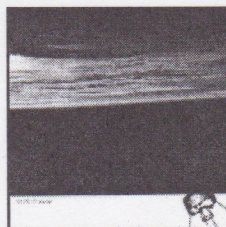
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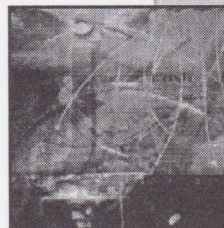
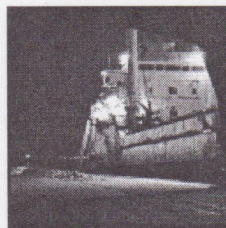
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for PP43 May/June 2001

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Any ads received after deadline may run in the following issue.
Those are the risks ... Are you the gambling type?
the risks

Things have been feeling a more than a little bookish over here lately. Perhaps it's the excitement over our cover story, which is the first public viewing of chapters from the long-awaited (I'm talking 14 years here) book about the Washington DC punk scene, *Dance of Days*. Or maybe it's the giddiness—not to mention pride—over the release of our own book, *We Owe You Nothing: Punk Planet the Collected Interviews*. Or perhaps it's just the weather. But no matter what it is, something's been driving everyone I know to curl up into a tiny ball in their favorite chair with something good to read. If everyone's doing it, why shouldn't you, right? You're holding 144 pages of quality reading right now, so go sit your ass down, pull a blanket up around you and get comfortable already! We won't go anywhere.

Settled in? Let's begin for real then.

This issue: I was delighted when I got an e-mail from Sander Hicks, the head honcho over at New York punk publishing powerhouse Soft Skull Press, announcing that *Dance of Days* was finally going to be published. I was downright overjoyed when he asked me if we wanted to be the first to reprint a couple chapters from it. Did we!? I had been waiting for years for the opportunity.

Around 20 issues ago, we published an article about a guy who was teaching a college course on punk rock. Included in his syllabus were excerpts from an unpublished book by Mark Andersen, a longtime DC punk activist. I asked the guy if he could send me copies of the chapters, as I was curious to take a look at them. He did, and I was blown away at the level of detail and accuracy displayed in Mark's narrative. I wanted more. But more never came. Until now, that is . . .

Those two chapters I read a few years ago will finally see the light (and be joined

by 13 other chapters) this March when Soft Skull Press releases *Dance of Days* by Mark Andersen and Mark Jenkins. *DoD* follows the hugely influential Washington DC punk scene from its inception up through the almost-present. It's truly mind-blowing. And you get to read two chapters from it here before it even hits bookshelves. Our luck is yours as well.

Speaking of luck. I feel so lucky—and beyond proud—to announce the release of *We Owe You Nothing: Punk Planet the Collected Interviews*. While we haven't been working on our book for 14 years, it almost seems like it. It's the culmination of six months of work (not to mention six years of the magazine) and like any new parent, I couldn't be happier with it! The book contains 25 of the best interviews we've ever published—including many out-of-print interviews—all with updated introductions and all laid out in easy-to-read book form. Black Flag, Kathleen Hanna, Ian MacKaye, Sleater-Kinney, Voices in the Wilderness, Steve Albini, Jello Biafra, Thurston Moore, Frank Kozik, Noam Chomsky, Winston Smith, Jody Bleyle, Matt Wobensmith . . . the names go on and on (for a complete list, look for the full page ad for the book later in this issue). It's a great companion piece to the magazine (as well as a nice bit of punk history in its own right) and I really, really hope you enjoy it.

Finally, how about this weather, eh? It's five degrees out right now and the snow just *never* seems like it's going to stop. I'm sure glad I've got some good reading to keep me inside—aren't you?

Happy 2001,

DAN

COVER

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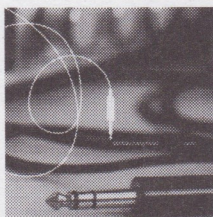
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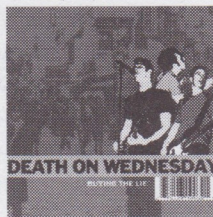
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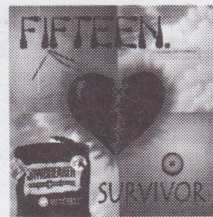
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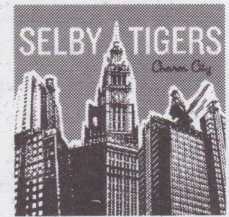
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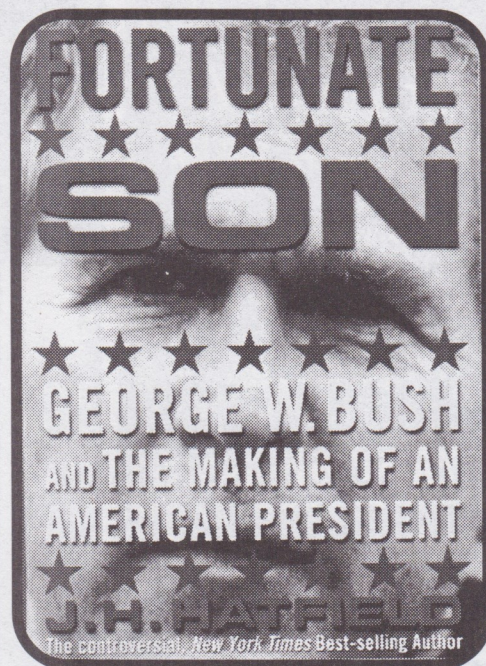


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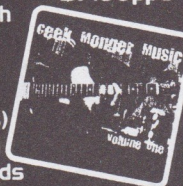
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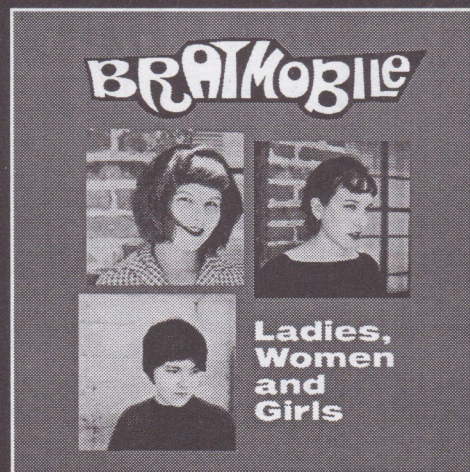
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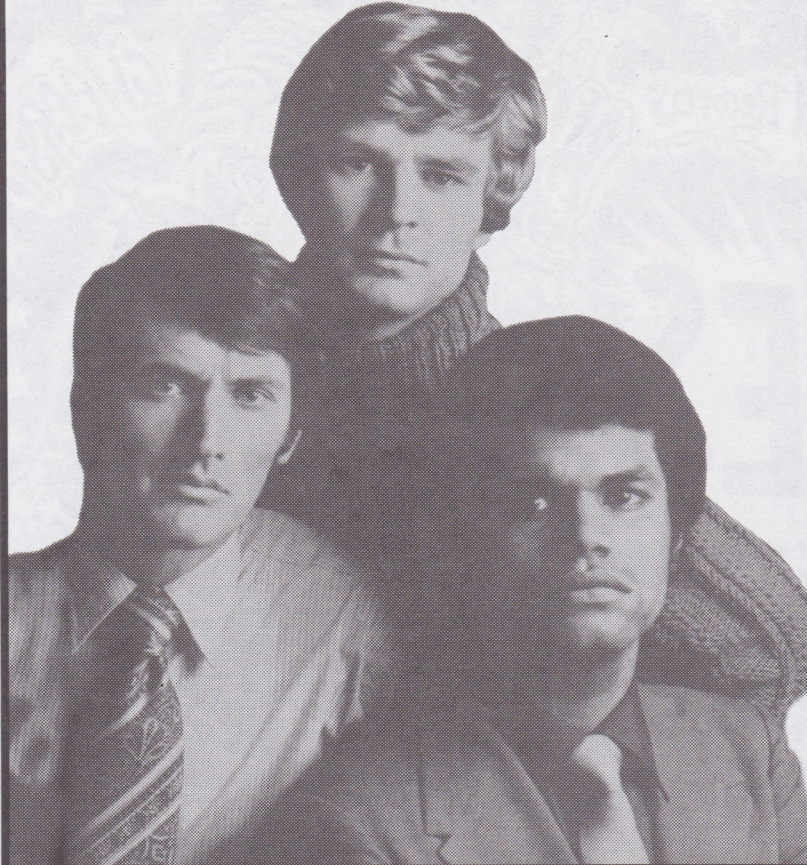
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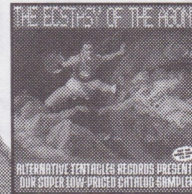
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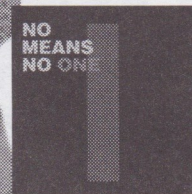


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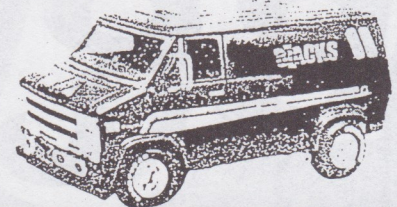


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COLUMN



Chicago seems to have ample provisions for all of my existence needs, and I really *want* to move there, but somehow I can't seem to do it. Barely there

for two weeks, I just can not resist taking the first ride back to the east coast, barreling across the scenic wastelands of highway-side Indiana, Ohio and western Pennsylvania, in a car manned by my upstairs neighbor, who has packed only marijuana brownies as snack food for the trip, and refuses to let anyone else drive for the entire thirteen hours, nodding off at the wheel and only snapping awake whenever a semi whose lane he's drifting into lays on the horn, to jerk the wheel back into linearity and enthusiastically relate the vivid hallucinations he's having.

During the all-night drive, in the course of which I, for the hundred-somethingth time in my life, come to grips with the inevitability of my own death, acclimating myself to the idea that I will be no more at any moment, counting up my life's accomplishments and realizing that they mainly center around a handful of LPs which have moved units in the low thousands and having my name in print in dubious periodicals such as the one you are holding in your hand currently, I get depressed, and begin to really look forward to the final embrace of the tractor-trailer's front grill. To my surprise, we arrive unscathed in New York City. My upstairs neighbor drops me off on the upper west side at eight in the morning and sets off in search of "the party." I am left with the prospect of making my way across the social landscape of this strange metropolis, feeling unprepared for the task on account of fatalistically having started to plan my schedule around dying a grisly death on the highways of rural PA, leaving as my legacy to future generations a few cryptic directorial notes and sketches regarding how best to transform the whole nasty incident into an ABC After-School Special and/or driver's ed film. Having sur-

vived the trip, however, I can only marvel at the essential injustice of a universe which would reward my heroic odyssey through the tortured night (oh yeah, I didn't even mention my neighbors outrageous stereo selections, about which he exercised the same totalitarian grip as on the steering wheel) with a trip to New York, of all places. It's like those Newlywed game shows you sometimes see where a young married couple subjects themselves to a half-hour of mortifying interrogation about their "whoopie" habits and his opinion of her breasts, hoping to score a washer/dryer or some cutlery, only to have the host announce at the end: "Bill and Edna, you've WON—A HONEYMOON VACATION TO TOLEDO, OHIO!" You can see their faces fall in that familiar disappointed look of pointless self-degradation which television audiences love.

For me, New York City is the flagship model of an urban environment antithetical to my existence concept. It's just not the kind of place where you want to show up for an extended stay with some change and two "sub-club" cards in your wallet. I suppose, like the newlyweds, I have no one but myself to blame for this current predicament, and as much as they might protest that they were hoping for the washer/dryer, you know they really just wanted a bite of Pat Sajak's pot brownies. Of course, a trip to New York City might be considered a better prize than a trip to Toledo in some circles, but, then again, it all depends on how you arrange things, conceptually. I'm all for doing as the Romans whilst in Rome; however, New York City always proves socially awkward for me as I'm constantly having to get my friends to pay for my tickets to the Coliseum.

I call my friend Matt at his office. It is literally "his;" he has started a graphic design firm in Manhattan, renting out office space and employing his friends in the type of utopian scenario you might have schemed about in a treehouse somewhere when you were twelve. It's impressive to me that he's actually managed to go through with the twelve-year-old-treehouse paradigm of good living, and seems even to be doing well. But his situation, rather than being atypical, is almost the norm now: the advent of a new video game, called HTML, which looks a lot more boring

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than Space Invaders from my untrained vantage point but apparently really enthuses everyone else in my age bracket, has provided many of my acquaintances in the city with outrageously high-paying jobs doing outrageously fun-seeming stuff. Gone is the hero-in-addict-living-in-a-cardboard-box-in-Soho model of starving New York artist, replaced by my fat and happy "web artist" friends, who have turned the Warholian Campbell's soup can and Brillo Box on their heads as well, now actually making web sites for Campbell's and Brillo and other such Coliseum-ticket-providing beneficiaries.

My usual employment environment involves a basket of fries and a tub of burbling grease, thus I am not fully prepared, upon my arrival, for the cleanliness and good stereo selections which abound in Matt's ergonomic workplace. I am reminded of a quote from one of Thomas Frank's ornery diatribes in *The Baffler*: "If your problem with capitalism is that you have to wear a grey suit and march in lock-step, I've got news for you: you don't have a problem with capitalism." Indeed, the staff at Matt's graphic produce conglomerate seems to be spending at least a reasonable portion of their income at hip thrift-stores, tattoo parlors and ye olde CD shoppe. Matt shows me around the place, fills me in on some of the trials and tribulations of being a small business owner: "We had to let one guy go," he laments, "He listened to Modest Mouse all the time. *Modest Mouse!* In the work place! Can you imagine such a thing?" He cranks the UOA up a notch. If there is any lock-step being propagated here it is of a very weird and culturally specific variety. I imagine the termination conversation: "Look, you do good work, you're very handy with photoshop, but I just think you'd be happier at one of the more indie-rock design firms. This is a punk design firm. Or, I can give you some references to some of the Phish-oriented agencies, do you think you could hang with that?" Youth culture triumphant and transcendent, standing in as the coded designations of social ordering which the older generation used to transmit via brand of necktie. It dawns on me exactly why it is that this older generation so fears the youth, feeling dependant on their command of the new, explosively developing technologies, and at the same time

resentful of how they are themselves rendered essentially neckless in this proverbial world of new coded neckties. Really, how can a 45-year old office-lifer even hope to compete in this alien economic order? I imagine my archetypical 45-year-old guy at home, staying up all night reading and re-reading computer manuals, trying to stay current and competitive, giving up finally in exasperation. "Honey, I can't do it," he laments to his wife. "I've read the manual five times now, I understand windows, I understand HTML, I know about GIF and JPG, but I can't find any reference to this UOA that the boss keeps talking about!"

I accompany the design-punks out for an extravagant and elegant meal at a posh Manhattan eatery. Matt's co-worker, Lee, shows me his new tattoo, a full-arm sleeve. They all seem at ease and relaxed in this environment. The restaurant staff, too, seems at ease with the idea of these guys, dressed in the same outfits they wore to hardcore shows in high school, translating the "emo-punk" look to its associative implicit "young professional" look (i.e. wallet chain = wallet). Were I at a table with guys wearing safety-pins in their faces and sporting huge pink mohawks, we'd be (probably correctly) identified as working for MTV. Despite the high volume of young people in here, there is no fear of being stiffed for a palpable tip in the establishment. The shadiest thing I could imagine right now would be seeing some older guy in a grey suit in here.

Dinner dispensed with, we proceed to a Lower East Side discotheque. Lee lets me use his cell phone to call a few people, just to ascertain their whereabouts, which are inevitably mundane and thus somehow perversely fascinating. Within about five minutes of cell phone usage I find myself weighing the certainty of brain tumors against the fact that I can now no longer envision life without the ability to track the movements of everyone I know at all times.

"If I had one of these phones, and then a kind of ' Battleship ' type board where I could stick little pegs to track people's movements..." I envision.

"Oh, that's called a palm pilot," says Lee.

At the disco, I mingle with an astounding array of what my old friend Richard Allen refers to as "minor celebrity friends."

Not the sort of people I can tell my parents I rubbed shoulders with and have them be particularly impressed, but the sort of people who, say, readers of this particular magazine might consider to be huge celebrities and get really excited about. It's low-stakes, New York City-wise, not exactly Drew Barrymore or Marilyn Manson, and the cost is only a dollar to get in, somewhat bringing down my dream of velvet-roped Manhattan hot-spots with muscle-bound goons in tuxedos picking only the most beautiful and charismatic people upon whom to bestow the honor of paying the thirty dollar cover charge. Still, even the dollar is provided by my extravagantly generous hosts. Matt's brother Mark takes me aside, "I know you're pretty low on cash, man," he says confidentially, "take this buck."

"Don't worry, Mark, I can swing it. It's just a dollar," I reassure him.

"Oh, come on, just take the damn thing," he says, pressing it into my hand and walking swiftly away, as if he's got trash bags full of the stuff at home and his bathroom is wallpapered with ones and he's just sick of seeing them.

Half an hour later, I'm disco-dancing with the crazed abandon which you can only truly muster when your proposed schedule for the day had involved being a charred carcass on the side of the PA turnpike, so that everything you do seems like free bonus minutes on some strange calling card of the soul. I realize with gnawing concern that I am having a pretty damn good time in New York City, the flagship city of anti-Burianism, and the only real hang-up which is preventing me from fully experiencing the moment is my nagging inability to come up with an articulation of why it sucks.

I feel an uneasy sense of guilt, as if standing before me on the dance-floor, ghost-of-Christmas-past style, is the phantasmal form of stodgy Thomas Frank, himself dressed in a very un-disco-like grey tweed suit, pointing at me accusingly and sneering in a repetitious, nagging mantra, "YOU haven't got a problem with capitalism. YOU haven't got a problem with capitalism." Damn it, man, I'm trying to dance here! When in Rome, you crazy old coot!

Seriously, though. What's my argument against New York City? Everyone around me seems happy, affluent, and enjoying the opportunities available to them for both productivity and recreation, without qualm or concern or embarrassment about the chain-clanking ghost on the dance floor. And I'm not hanging out with yuppies here—I'd say the room is filled with at least sixty percent people who take out regular ads in *Punk Planet*, are featured in articles and reviews, or at least read the magazine and pick up on the hidden subtexts of what's acceptable in terms of office stereo selections. Matt and Mark, for instance, haven't sold out to the Man; they work at jobs they enjoy, employing their friends, running a record label on the side. They have cell phones and can trace their friends' every movement. What more can you ask for?

I can't deny that it all strikes me as strangely appealing. I find myself questioning aloud my decision to move to Chicago. "Oh, the *Second City*," one of the beautiful people from some famous

band, standing in my vicinity, titters derisively, in the exact condescending tone which Chicagoans in their darkest fantasies imagine New Yorkers to go around tittering about them in.

"Well, I just can't dig this city," I mutter defensively, but with the clear pubescent crack of uncertainty in my voice. "It's too expensive. It's too professional-seeming. It's crime-ridden. It's dehumanizing. Uh...." My arguments seem hollow. Try as I might, I can find no hidden dark side to New York. The day jobs look funner than most towns' night life, and the fascist mayor has cracked down on crime in all the ways which maximize pleasantness for the young professional class (you can walk around the lower east side at four a.m. and feel totally safe from drug-related crime these days, but also still order drugs to your home as if they were pizza, via vaguely illegal delivery services, and probably pay with a credit card if you don't have cash on you). And, please, don't even talk to me about the essential hollowness at the emotional core of dancing in a dark, crowded room of sweaty, reveling, attractive celebrities.

Looking around the discotheque, it occurs to me that I should, perhaps, give in. Even phantasmal Thomas Frank has packed up his critiques, and is working it out on the dance floor now, having knocked back a few gin and tonics and "loosened up." I have my rent and security deposit on me, payment pending upon my return to the Second City, and I realize that I could just take the money and run, probably cover a cell phone and my first month of tumorous minutes with the money. It's like the highway marker advising last exit before a toll road, pointing me towards the ramp away from reality and in to a continuation of this strange fantasy life which is somehow denoted "real" and "adult" and "responsible" and, at the same time, is the perverse cocktail culmination of twelve year old treehouse fantasies and adolescent rock and roll daydreams, with paychecks provided by huge corporations and computational servitude.

But—No—I just can't do it. For one thing, my parents would have a heart attack. I've spent far too many holidays sitting them down, looking them squarely in the eye and saying in even, measured tones, "Listen to me. Get it through your heads. I will NEVER do ANYTHING with my life. Understand? NOTHING." To suddenly call them and tell them I'm going to move to New York and try to break into designing advertisements for shoe companies or something like that—I don't think they could handle the shock.

And, despite the constant barrage of nightlife opportunity, the entertainment carpet-bombing, the inexhaustible raging hurricane of Things To Do, I just can't picture myself doing it all. It's the whole work-hard-play-hard ethic which I can't agree with, fundamentally, the ultra-fast social metabolism where you consume, earn, consume, earn, as fast and as circularly as possible. The entertainment barrage exists as a distraction, a reward, justifying the workday without which it would have no reason to exist in the first place. I just think, work-hard-play-hard? what's the point? I don't enjoy working, and I don't even enjoy playing all that much. I enjoy being unemployed and moping. That, to me,

is the ideal state. And this paradigm seems antithetical to the essence of New York City.

Thus, by the end of the week, I find myself headed back west, towards Chicago, contemplating my visit to the east coast with a strange sort of inner calm. I have made my peace with New York City; I've been to Rome and seen their ways, and it is not my way, but it is also not my place to denigrate their way, especially if it's going to cut me off from getting taken out to eat when visiting, which is definitely an extremely integral part of my way. Live it up, New Yorkers! One day the apocalypse will come and raging hordes of the angry and disenfranchised phoneless populace will tear your computers from the walls and smash them over your tumor-filled skulls, but until then, crank up the UOA, as will I, at my fry-cook job, until the day the boss sits me down and tells me, "look, you fry well, you seem adept at handling and disposing of grease, but we're just sort of more Led Zeppelin-oriented around here. Might I suggest you get a job at Jinx?" At which point it'll hopefully be the desolate dead middle of a brutal and unforgiving winter, and I'll be catatonically depressed and sit around the apartment all day contemplating where my life went wrong. Oh, yeah. I can hardly wait. Chicago looks to be promising as hell.



So listen, I have had no time to make this issue's column into some sort of neatly tied up, articulate, polemic, deep or cohesive anything,

so I am gonna lamp like Andy Rooney and just give you the random thoughts, as they happened.

My last week has been a weird one, which made it all the better. Top 4 dumbest things I did are as follows:

1. Eating a burrito in the dark.
2. Saying aloud to another person, at the Y, that I worked in *the music business*. Soon after, a woman followed me into the locker room, singing to the point of performing, as if I was going to up and discover her, like I was a Star Search judge in a towel.
3. Putting my fingers in my mouth mere minutes after pumping gas and touching the gas pump handle, possibly the dirtiest place ever.
4. Drinking 20 some ounces of bubble tea after midnight in Chinatown (tied) OR drinking 32 ounces of bubble tea so fast I got sick and threw up in a parking lot, while three elderly Asian ladies sat feet away in a car watching me and waving.
5. Listen to the new Godspeed on headphones while working. I felt like I was back in 11th grade, stoned and trying to look busy and not completely high in computer lab.

...

One night, I'm driving down Division about 10 pm. I slow down as something big n' shiny appears in the road. The big something turns out to be a man, in the middle of the lane, pushing himself backwards, with one leg, in a wheel chair. I drive very slow and at a reasonable distance behind him. For a block and a half. My headlights beam and twinkle off the chrome of his chair. People are honking behind me. We maintain eye contact for a good 20-30 seconds. Or at least I think he was looking at me (I think, "that could be me"). I think there is something amazingly, beautifully fuck-you about this man in his roller-chair acting like he owns the road as much as any of us in our cars, with our working limbs, with our places to live. He glances behind him and makes a right at the supermarket.

...

I have the sort of sense of humor that gets me in trouble semi-frequently. Ok, often, but not every day. Last week, I was out every fucking night and most days because of the fun times la rue that was Flower 10 festival. I had houseguests for six days. By day two it was like being at Camp Pranksalot and I was head counselor. As in don't sleep too long or we will hide all yr stuff and put freshly chopped garlic in yr pillow and hair. Or 5 cans of dog food in yr suitcase. Or use yr cell phone and orchestrate an elaborate prank calling all yr friends back home saying we have not seen you in 38 hours and you were last spotted when the dudes from Tortoise were dropping you off at Manhole at 4am, and that we have yr cell phone, your wallet and yr shoes, and call and ask the people you work with if you can normally handle a three or four day bender, or if you normally mix "Kalpax" and "D" (nothing says "yikes" like made up drugs). Or repeatedly spit water all over people who didn't think it was funny the first time. I like trouble too much, I think.

...

Dreams about rock:

I am trying to liberate a girl-pal I am in a band with so we can go on tour. She works at a gas station, and we blow the gas station up by setting it and the people inside on fire. We flee and meet up with the rest of our band, which happens to be Bright Eyes, who we have never met until now. Connor is having a veritable emo-meltdown about us burning people, so I try to kiss him to calm him. He doesn't kiss back, but rather bears his teeth like a bratty animal; he is not game for my kissing. It is 1980 in the dream, and we are touring with Liz Phair.

I gore Jim O'Rourke with my hands and teeth, more or less gutting his torso. He is totally dead with a huge hole in what was his stomach. I am covered in blood. This is somehow my job and also very funny to me. In one hand I have a turkey-baking sized ziplock bag of his blood, in the other, several feet of hard, shit covered intestines. I turn around and attempt to feed the intestines to a band I used to work with's manager. He tells me there's shit all over that, he's not eating that, I laugh and shove it in his face.

I am having a meeting with Pearl Jam in what appears to be a motel kitchenette. Everyone is Pearl Jam is about 40+ and has no sense of humor. I start the meeting by telling Mr. Vedder I just dreamt he was trying to buy organic fruit from my roommate and try to make a joke out of it. That's not funny to him at all. They run a record label and want me to work with one of their new bands, Three Dog Night, which is the new band from someone from Presidents of the United States. I want to tell them there is already a band by this name, but keep my mouth shut because the new band sucks ass anyway.

I am on tour in Egypt with Jets to Brazil. Blake is forcing everyone to dress and perform and speak in the manner of 17th century England. I keep trying to take off my giant wig, but he yells at me. The show is in a tomb.

I am at a large German university, watching science experiments when the building becomes overrun with shapeshifting vampires trying to bite me. I run outside to try and get away, but don't have the special documents and passport to get past the army guards. I see a huge crowd of college kids demonstrating, waiting for Fugazi to play their rally. The guards are firing at me. I yell to Ian, perched up on a balcony above the crowd and ask what to do. He says run into the crowd because the police won't fire on the students. One of the students gives me a piggyback ride to safety.

...

I spend about a weekend every other month house sitting for an older lady pal at her hippie mansion with a gianourmous yard, and her dogs and chickens. I like house sitting because it's very much like assimilating into someone else's life. In this house-life I am a 40 something lady with giant looms everywhere and a fireplace, spending my early mornings defrosting homemade organic dog food. This also means every morning I go out to the chicken tractor (a kind of chicken house) and feed the chickens too. Chickens will eat anything—flour, old apples, meat, plants—whatever. The chickens were very small this summer but they have since been supersized, and are like 2 feet tall and 15 pounds. Friday morning, I am going to go feed them a left over burrito. It is all of eight am and here I am in my jammies, a Jets to Brazil t-shirt and my running shoes making like the living dead, with a burrito to bribe the rooster to keep from making those horrible noises any longer. I lift the top door of the chicken tractor up to toss the burrito into their bowl, but they won't move away from my hand. Utilizing a method I have seen used effectively by the dogs, I growl at them. I growled way too hard. It is suddenly chicken mayhem and everyone's hoppin' the fence. Two chickens and the rooster are on the loose. I am freaking out, pullin' some bad Jerry Lewis style moves all over the garden. Those of you who have ever worked or lived on a farm can imagine what my next hour and a half was like, or if you remember a particular scene or three from *Rocky*, it's pretty much the same deal. Attempting to capture them with a laundry basket, a tarp, bare hands, a fence, a long stick—none of this worked. The chickens hop the garden

fence, chase the dogs, and I give up and go in the house. On the suggestion of my office mate, I herd them into a corner and throw a heavy blanket over them and one by one, carry them back to the safety of their tractor, whispering "I am not going to kill you, I promise." Little Hopper, in her emo-jammies, chasing chickens like some skit off Hee-Haw gone awry.

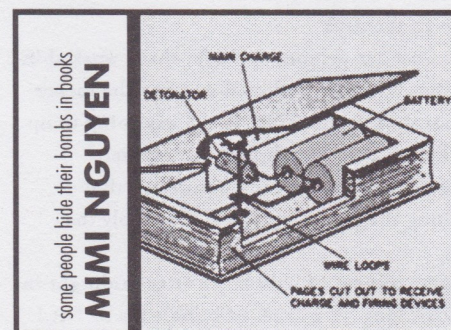
...

My roommates Ben and Emily and I are sitting in Soul Vegetarian eating on Sunday. Ben announces that he has a dilemma—their pet Sea Monkeys have died. How? Ben thinks it because he had changed their water with a bottle of water that he failed to notice Emily had spit a large gob of phlegm in to. Now they are all in a messy heap at the bottom of their mini Sea Monkey tank. He says he has hope though because, as the instructions say, brine shrimp can come back to life, you just have to wait for all the water to evaporate and then you can rehydrate them and they will come back to life, like Kool-Aid with a touch more evolution on it. "Then we could have undead Sea Monkeys" he says. Intrigued by the thought of zombie brine shrimp in my very own home, I offer up an idea "That could take forever, for the water to evaporate, why don't we hold a hairdryer on their tank and hurry them up a bit. Or maybe we can pour them into a pan and put them on the stove?" Legitimate discussion of whether you could potential burn undead Sea Monkeys into being straight up dead via overcooking them ensues.

...

And with that I conclude this issues "session." Thanks to everyone who writes me, and all those Destiny's Child loving punks across the land—I feel you. In constant rotation from the bottom of the well: Radiohead *Kid A*, Euphone *Hashin It Out*, Husker Du *Zen Arcade*, the new Eulcid, The Clash, Liquid Liquid, Dusty Springfield *Dusty in Memphis*. Godspeed You Black Emperor, JJ FAD and the rap shows on 88.1.

Tell me what's new with you: mcfrenchvanilla@yahoo.com, P.O. Box 14624 Chicago, IL 60614.



In the American Studies aisle of the University Press Bookstore I have premonitions of unnatural fires, staring up at *Without*

Sanctuary. (My heart leapt into my throat.) A thick, black monograph weighted with so much blood and history that it is propped up in an alcove on prominent display. It is a photographic record of lynching.

These professional and amateur photographs were often made into postcards and sold as souvenirs to the crowds in attendance. I imagine these postcards being sent to the friends and relatives of the white people pictured here, some of them staring into the camera and smiling as a mutilated black man or woman swings above their heads. There are children too, brought to the lynching by a schoolteacher, let out of class early to learn a lesson. What is it that allows them to watch a man tortured and killed within (literal) stone's throw but with such psychic distance that they might find this souvenir, what—? *Amusing?*

I close my eyes and see these postcards being passed from hand to hand, like trading cards, or threats.

The Tuskegee Institute records the reported lynching of 4,742 blacks between 1882 and 1968, no doubt a small percentage of the actual murders systematically committed. Lynching scholars testify that these scenes were repeated thousands of times—often before the entire citizenry of a given town. These “lynching bees” or “Negro barbecues” functioned as a space to produce a sense of community, like church revivals or carnivals. I imagine they must have included elements from both—fervent affirmations of a higher order, a shared scared feeling (of being both saved and superior), and vendors pitching lemonade, maybe. Residents of nearby hamlets would bring picnic baskets, gossip with neighbors over harvests, weddings and births as black bodies swing overhead.

In a mixed-media piece called *Accused/Blowtorch/Padlock*, black photographer Pat Ward Williams frames a photograph of a lynched black man through a window pane, locked to a tree with his arms pulled behind him, wrenched out of sockets, tendon from bone. The photograph is broken up into parts: the muscles stretched thin across ribcage, the chain cutting so deep into flesh it disappears into shadow and blood, the wrists pulled achingly toward a unseen point outside the film exposure.

Scrawled in a shaky hand around the wooden frame (I imagine I can hear the frantic white chalk skittering across the blackboard, as anxious as graffiti): “Can you be BLACK and look at this? *Life* magazine published this picture. Could Hitler show pictures of the Holocaust to keep JEWS in line? Who took this picture? Couldn't he just as easily let the man go? Did he take his camera home and then come back with a blowtorch? ... How can this photograph exist? WHO took this picture? Oh, god. *Life* answers—page 141—no credit. *Somebody do something.*”

In a series of anguished questions, moving nervously from plea to demand, Williams implicates not only the act of lynching but also the act of photographing the violence. “No credit”—why? Did the photographer recognize his complicity? Was he ashamed? Did he leave the man to the business of dying, still chained to a tree, furtive in his cowardice? Did he self-consciously stage his anonymity, in order to focus attention on the horror? Or was he a participant who sought to inspire terror in the pages of a national magazine? A former vendor of lynching postcards, his business suffering with the postal service ban on his type of goods, did he think he might be teaching a lesson?

What is the difference between watching and witnessing?

In an essay written for *Without Sanctuary*, Hilton Als is openly bitter, skeptical of the humanitarian/historical “function” expressed by editor and publisher in reprinting these photographs and postcards. He identifies, instead, a kind of voyeurism: “In writing this, I have become another cliché, another colored person writing about a nigger's life. So doing, I'm feeding, somewhat, into what the essayist George W.S. Trow called ‘white euphoria,’ which is defined by white people exercising their largesse in my face as they say, Tell me about yourself, meaning, Tell me how you've suffered. Isn't that what you people do? Suffer nobly, poetically sometimes even? Doesn't suffering define you?”

To ask, “Can you look at this?” is a much different question than “Can you be BLACK and look at this?” What it means for me to be looking at these is yet another question with another dynamic—a refugee with no past in *this* blood and fire and death, blood and fire and death is instrumental to why I am here (in America) in the first place. This other story is not the same but it is related to the question of photography and accountability, power and powerlessness and the ideological function of vision—it is the pivotal difference between “can you look” and *how you look*. That is, when it is not photographs of lynched black men and women it is photographs of napalmed Vietnamese girls that become the occasion for, “So, tell me how you've suffered. *Isn't that what you people do?*”

...

A Korean American feminist contacts a friend of mine, an administrative assistant in the Asian American studies program they both work for in New York City. This woman, an adjunct professor, has been looking at photographs of bombings. She notes in her e-mail message that in viewing images of napalmed villages in Viet Nam, many of the victims were not wearing pants. She is thinking in particular of the black-and-white photograph of a naked young girl screaming in terror as napalm flays muscle and meaning. She wants to know if this is some sort of Vietnamese tradition, not wearing pants. Thuy, who is Vietnamese, can't manage to word a polite reply.

We're speaking in urgent whispers because we are at a professional academic conference, there to discuss the production of knowledge or its lack, among other things. We lean in toward each other, heads close. Thuy wrings her hands and rolls her eyes. “How could she begin to think that an entire country doesn't wear pants? Why does she even think that's a legitimate question?”

At the same conference, I argue in my paper on a Viet Nam panel with white academics that photographs of suffering are never “innocent.” That is, I don't think a photo of a burning girl can “cure” historical amnesia, that the meanings attached to an *imagined fluttering of thin arms, a face contorted* are necessarily coherent or obvious. My moderator, a mild-manner traditional historian, insists in his following commentary that such images are still necessary for rousing the masses. These images, he says, can be used for humanitarian purposes.

But the fact that someone can look at a photograph of a burning girl and ask questions, not about the war but about her nakedness, would seem to contradict him. Isn't this evidence enough that there's no inherent "truth" to be apprehended in a photograph? A "humanitarian" message is hardly transparent. Does the image necessarily call upon us (as viewers) to recognize the instrumentality of the (conditions of) haunting? Having become the sign by which we realized the truism *war is a terrible event*, does the still image of a naked young girl screaming in terror as napalm flays muscle and meaning *always* invite a reckoning with the phantoms of modernity's violence?

Browsing the zine rack at the record store I picked up a poorly-made zine, called something about "no power" and "little people." The cover is a xerox reproduction of that photograph of the napalmed girl. Inside are more images of Vietnamese people in various states of distress to death, coupled with short paragraphs vaguely expressing the author's own dissatisfactions, his internal doubt. I can't find anything that might explain why these photographs, why that war. I hate it, it's disturbing and gut-wrenching—what is the process by which four million deaths become the occasion for *his* speech?

Even the well-meaning (for what little it is often worth) aestheticize violence for their own purposes. In *The Rhetoric of Empire*, David Sparr asks, "What really is the role of journalistic representation in making people aware of the suffering of others? There is clearly a sense in which the media can declare an emergency, can make an appeal on behalf of refugees or victims of famine, and elicit a practical response. Yet the very artfulness of this appeal, the images and techniques on which it relies, allows for a certain nonidentification on the part of the audience, and perhaps even allows that audience to take some satisfaction in the image of suffering as it belongs to the other."

Photojournalists, armed with cameras and good intentions, assume that well-framed photographs of suffering will trigger a moral response, an outrage among "folks back home." But what we get are only affirmations of what we (think we) already know—that the Third World is mysteriously gripped by violence, trauma, and wars that make no sense (to us in the "civilized" First World). It's likely that it never occurred to Nick Ut, the Pulitzer-Prize winning war photographer, that anyone looking at a photograph of a young Vietnamese girl—her flesh burning away—would ever think to ask such a question, but they have and will again.

What is it that allows for that kind of distance?

Linda Le is a contemporary French Vietnamese author, and in her first translated novel called *Slander*, I remember what it means to be iconic by way of biting prose. "Remember when your people began to leave the Country. The fugitives piled by the hundreds into little boats as fragile as giant matchboxes. They crossed the ocean on those boats. Back here, the people rubbed their hands together. They had found the ideal victims, and they called them freedom fighters. Why, the frivolous people were just about ready to run to their yachts and go rescue the victims. They

piled into boats in their turn, overloaded with cameras and photographic equipment, fighting to get the first shots of these victims with *such sweet, sad eyes*. Then styles changed. Other frivolous people had tracked down new victims..."

Once again, I have to ask the question. Does the image necessarily call upon us as viewers to recognize the instrumentality of the (conditions of) haunting? Having become the sign by which we realized the truism *racism is a tragic thing*, does the still image of a naked black man screaming as fire flays muscle and meaning *always* invite a reckoning with the phantoms of modernity's violence? Dwayne and I have been corresponding between my bouts of exam preparation and teaching and his own series of workshops and research. Punk rocker and the Literacy Through Photography project coordinator at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, he responds at length to a vague inquiry:

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Without Sanctuary, to my mind, traverses two uneven terrains. One is the blood-soaked earth, the invisible land bridge from Africa to the New World, mapped by two hands, one black, one white. The other is cratered and shell-shocked, a mud smear across the globe of countless historical atrocities. The publisher of this book is the same house that published *The Killing Fields*, portrait photographs of victims from S-21 (Tuol Sleng), taken by the Khmer Rouge as self-documentation at their notorious torture and execution center. The same slick design, the refined and understated (tasteful) packaging of death. When I first encountered *The Killing Fields* I was shocked into silent weeping, there in the consummately unemotional aisles of Harvard's bookstore.

I wanted to strip every book from the tidy shelf, to make a tearful spectacle of our ready consumption. Instead I choked on my own unspoken grief and made way for a thick white man in a heavy worsted trenchcoat as he groped in the obscure darkness of the lower shelves.

Recently a young, up-and-coming documentary photographer stayed at my house as a guest of my roommate. They had collaborated in Malawi and Rwanda, doing an extensive written and visual piece on families headed by children after the genocidal killings in 1994 had claimed their parents and adult relatives. This clean-cut, energetic white man, a recent graduate of Duke University, was well-favored by his professors and now too by the photography elite in New York City where he lives. He had come to North Carolina to present at a retreat for other recent graduates from various universities who were about to begin documentary work with NGOs around the world. In recounting to me his discussion on ethics he said, "It's documentary photography. You have to take risks and get in people's faces. If you don't like it, don't do it."

Within his language was his underlying subscription to the Nation; the white, dominant culture, which he believes should be altered, not resisted, overthrown, set alight and burned down. In the long history of reformers there is a clear reductive aestheticization in liberals' use of images of war and suffering, of documenting the silenced and their silencing. This photographer and

his colleagues, in denying this critique, would likely claim that this work by motive shifts it to a different plane. Further, the need to influence policy asserts an ironclad imperative. Not only the policy of our own government, but also of international organizations like the U.N. to help secure funding from corporate philanthropies for Third World nations undergoing devastation. They are guilty of a pragmatic reduction. Of collecting horror and loss and then condensing these into choice images to nudge the White national narrative in a different direction, rather than require the gaze be broken and the pencil and the camera be handed over to the subject. They staunchly defend their right to the mechanisms of recording, of telling. There is a deep unwillingness to forfeit. Or blink.

This book asks many questions of us and many in turn need to be leveled at it. About how the pictures extend understanding and complicity, how they challenge or illuminate present seepage of age-old prejudice and bigoted violence. We are forced to ask who will own these images and who will benefit (culturally and fiscally) from the sale of the book? Publishing is fundamentally a business and as such hinges on profit. And in America, the most profit seems to be made on the spectacle of others' misery. For myself, and this is the most essential and most tenuous possibility of the book, I want to be always be moved to carry myself to the position of one who witnesses rather than simply watches.

...

Here something becomes terribly, terrifyingly clear—that vision is not a transparent or a passive operation, that something intervenes between retina and image, something like ideology. The meanings of photographs aren't fixed or stable—such images (and the events depicted) as the lynching postcards had been naturalized within the logic of Jim Crow resentment, vengeance, racial terror and oppression. The use value of such photographs for humanitarian purposes needs to be evaluated, then, for the structures of power (inherent in the act of looking) that it reproduces—these are images that still carry information about a group of powerless people to another group addressed as socially powerful. The gap between intent and function can't always be breached, and the incommensurability of such photographs seems to always exceed a statement of purpose or historical introduction or caption.

Against the positivism of the human rights discourse that often accompanies these photographs of lynching, racial terror, poverty or third world suffering, feminist artist Martha Rosler suggests that documentary photography "is [actually more] like horror movies, putting a face on fear and transforming threat into fantasy, into imagery. One can handle imagery by leaving it behind. *It is them, not us.*"

This book—weighted by expense (it is beautifully produced) and history (it is horrifyingly produced)—hardly offers an adequate accounting of the violence.

Jacques Derrida once suggested that haunting belongs to the structure of every hegemony. These photographs and postcards are not just material evidence of historical and social effects (like

bodies or their bones), but a conjuring trick in and of themselves. They invoke the ghosts of lynched men and women, lynching men and women, and the still-breathing specter of racism at the heart of American ontology.

That is, what is simply *more* violence when you are already living with too much? It does not end the way we might have thought it had—there is still James Byrd, Abner Louima, Amadou Diallo, Patrick Dorismond, never mind those who are unnamed in the popular historical record. There are some pasts that are not left behind, or as Als repeats, "I resent these pictures for making me feel anything at all."

...

Thank you to both Dwayne Dixon and Rosey Truong. I had to trim Dwayne's response to keep this column at an acceptable length. Dwayne is an amazing and dedicated ally and if you're interested in speaking to him, you can always reach him at: dedixon@acpubs.duke.edu or at The Center for Documentary Studies, 1317 W. Pettigrew St., Durham, NC 27705. Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is a fictionalized tale of the haunting effects of slavery; that both history and haunting are material and embodied is made heartrendingly clear.

Write to me if you want, and give me a break from studying for my oral exams. Mimi Nguyen, POB 11906, Berkeley, CA 94712-2906, slander13@mindspring.com.



One of the most devastating things punk rock has done is to assist in turning kids against their parents.

A year or so ago somebody wrote an article in *Punk Planet* decrying the Warped Tour. A year later, I'm sitting in the backstage area of the Warped Tour near Lake Tahoe. I'm interviewing a band. I ask a member basic questions, some mildly challenging, some he's heard before I'm sure. This band is of the anarchist variety. I saw them before, and what stood out about their performance was the vocalist basically bragging about how he spits on the cars of rich people.

Today, as he speaks, I hear an immense anger. Beyond the rhetoric and practice of social equality and "treating people with respect" (an idea I have absolutely no understanding of since everybody interprets respect differently) that this band purports, what I hear in the vocalist is the tone of somebody who has not been validated.

I note too that this punk band vocalist, and his band-mate that enters later, are angry to the point that I sense it is taking a physical toll on them. Younger than me, I'm sure, they look

much older, worn and tired.

On the surface, yes, social equalities are on this band's agenda today and probably every day, as with many punk bands and those concerned with the world's state of affairs. There is no end to the concern about humanity.

And yet anger, a punk staple, is a primary feeling. Anger is unresolved pain. Pain from what? I can only speculate, and much individual pain often begins at the family level.

What I do know is that in our culture, despite its meritocracy, the individual is devalued, and this has devastating consequences that leave family members, especially Euro-American families, segregated from each other.

I have observed that when people turn against their parents, consequences of unresolved family entanglements often remain hidden. So the pain manifests itself in many forms that can seem to have externalized validity. Acting out behaviorally is seen as a response to something someone else did to the person who is acting out: "He did this to me, so I did that." Other forms of unresolved entanglements are seemingly hidden and may be demonstrated in the form of rescuing others, as in trying to be everything to everyone, grandiose feelings of having to save people, animals, etc. from suffering and so on. Or pain may be enacted by following another family member into death via drug use and other high-risk behaviors, as examples. The apparent manifestation, such as drug addiction, may often have transgenerational roots that didn't directly involve the addict. This person may be enacting the dynamics and unaware of why, other than to blame an external source. Quick, simple blame with this kind of attribution keeps pain on the surface, as in the form of anger, and its source remains unexamined.

Punk as a system of sub-cultural beliefs does not value parental authority, so to get at what the expressed pain is really about, it is important to start at the family level¹. Many punks have rebelled against their parents, acts that are systemically inappropriate. Since it is impossible to shut out parents from our lives—they are and always will be our parents, and they came first in the family order—to attempt to deny them, despite circumstances, will lead to unresolved, sometimes harmful dynamics. When looking at individual angst, I see not just a systemic injustice; I also imagine more intimate entanglements at the family level. For many, resolution may come from this angle. That happens by taking parents as parents, as a husband takes his wife and vice versa.

An example:

A child who was molested by her father may grow up to resent her father. Systemically, what is important to notice is that often the daughter was acting out of love for her parents, which may be because the mother would no longer take the father. For whatever reason, the daughter then is recruited as a substitute in order to retain a balance in the family system. Despite her present day angst, for the daughter to say, "Mom, I agreed to do this for you," the daughter is opening up the dynamic for a resolution,

one that can happen by acknowledging the love the daughter has for her parents, a love which is acted out in order to preserve the family system.

I was fortunate enough to see the dynamics of this work exposed just like this example. To the shock of some audience members, it turned out that despite what may be apparent on the surface, which is what we commonly like to see—that the daughter is a victim of molestation—what the hidden dynamics said was that, in reality, the daughter was acting out of love in order to preserve the systemic balance of the family.

Though it may sound outlandish to say, bringing out these dynamics allows for a resolution that has a healing effect on the system. Systemic entanglements and their resolutions do not care what is considered just, ideal and right on a cognitive and/or moral level. It is, simply, what is.

Cheated by cultural value systems that, in particular to Euro-American cultures, devalue the family system while placing the individual as most important, Euro-Americans face an interesting fate that often pits them against their very life lines. That's not to say this isn't the case with non Euro-Americans; certainly each cultural group faces a different fate. In contrast, African Americans face a culturally-influenced matriarchal lineage in which women often play the roles of mother and father, since fathers are often absent from the family. Since this is inappropriate on a systemic level, the mother bears the responsibility of both mother and father. For a mother to say "I am just a woman" can have a profound effect on placing the gender dynamics more in balance. The reverse, of course, could be true as well. In any case, Euro-Americans, being culturally dominant, have created a values system at the expense of non-whites. As victimizers, they hold a bigger burden. I am less concerned about the victims of oppression than I am about what it is victimizers must do to balance cultural dynamics.

Punk rockers, despite their best intentions toward righting oppression, often further cycles of conflict because they are acting out of ignorance—and love!—to the very things they are truly mad about. Because our entire cultural voice has been created for us long before we were born, and we all sense there is something inherently wrong with it, we lash out. The lashing out is often about something else entirely. The anger/pain expressed in punk rock can on one level be attributed to punks not finding how to love their parents.

By adopting a moral model of looking at life—an odd choice of views considering moral positions are the stuff that Rush Limbaugh, Dr. Laura and the country's entire police force and judicial system are based upon—the punk mentality sidesteps what is; instead, it favors righteousness. In doing so, cycles of conflict are furthered. Resolution, then, is minimal.

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¹ Ultimately, however, systemic entanglements must be looked at from a much broader level because the individual cannot be blamed for what is systemically wrong, culturally

and at the family level. In fact, despite my worst critiques of previous years, I'm making an attempt to refrain from blaming individuals.

To work with individuals, either as a teacher or in just a one-to-one conversation is great; at the same time, it should be kept in mind that work on an individual level may not have the necessary influence on what is systemically wrong. Historically, this has been the case, and though it may be a valid technique for improving the lives of others, it is in systemic change or improvement that there is broader efficacy.

Further Reading

For further information about Euro-Americans as the dominant culture, cultural identity development and how the dominant culture impacts other cultures, refer to *Using Race and Culture in Counseling and Psychotherapy: Theory and process* by Janet Helms and Donelda Cook (1999) and *Counseling the Culturally Different: Theory and practice* by Derald Wing Sue and David Sue (1999).

For information about the transgenerational roots of family dynamics, see *The Ancestor Syndrome: Transgenerational psychotherapy and the hidden links in the family tree* (1998) by Anne Ancelin Schützenberger.

See Bert Hellinger, Gunthard Weber and Hunter Beaumont, *Love's Hidden Symmetry: What makes love work in relationships* for more on how family systems find homeostasis even when harmful, as well as how hidden dynamics can be exposed and resolved. See also Bert Hellinger's and Gabriel ten Hövel's *Acknowledging What Is: Conversations with Bert Hellinger* (1999) and *Touching Love Volume 2: A teaching seminar with Bert Hellinger and Hunter Beaumont* (1999).

Finally, refer to Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization* (1990) for the efficacy of systemic change and how we often "fixate on events, just as we've done since childhood. Last month's sales, new budget cuts, who just got promoted or fired. ...Primary threats to our survival today come not from events but from slow gradual processes to which we are 90 percent blind."

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This column is part 3 in a series from one of my travel diaries. The last column left me in Hamburg on tour with *His Hero is Gone* (Todd, Paul, Yannick, Carl). I apologize in

advance for the misspelling of certain Polish words. I can't figure out how to type that special "l" character with a slash through it.

Wednesday 22 April, 1998 • Berlin, Germany

I love the breakfasts we've been getting with bread and every kind of spread imaginable (and some you would never be able to imagine) but eating junk all day every day is starting to take its toll. I checked my email which was quite odd because the keys on the keyboard were in different places. Paul played a set of acoustic glam metal numbers with the rest of us cheering him on and singing along while we waited for that mysterious something you're always waiting for on tour. On our way out of town we stopped at (surprise, surprise!) a record store. We were running way late so when we saw a parking spot that was nowhere near big enough we just pulled in sideways and parked halfway on the sidewalk. Brilliant. The store was a bit small and a little pricey so I only bought 2 LP's. About every 20 minutes or so Todd would say, "OK guys, we really should think about leaving," before looking through a few more racks of records.

We thought we were going to be way late for the show but the food wasn't even ready by the time we got there. Paul gave me and Yannick much needed haircuts. It came out somehow that Henrik has been doing gymnastics for 11 years and that he'd even gone to Los Angeles for a competition. He stood on his hands for at least a full minute and gracefully landed on the ground in the splits in front of our wide-eyed open-mouthed faces.

Peace of Mind were stuck in a traffic jam and unfortunately they had the backline. They finally showed up around 10 or so. The show wasn't too memorable. I liked one of Peace of Mind's 7" and was somewhat disappointed by them live. On the way out of the venue we heard a strange noise coming from the back of the van. Paul checked it out and discovered a big chunk of plastic with a nail on it that was stuck in one of the tires. A little while later we heard a loud clunk and felt the van shift. Amazingly enough we were across the street from Henrik's apartment but he was a good sport and stuck around while Jörn and Paul changed the flat. We managed to get to Thomas' apartment around 3 and listened to the Y LP which was kind of cool after having heard all the songs live for the previous week. I squeezed in between Todd and Carl on a large cushion on the floor and immediately fell asleep.

Thursday 23 April • Berlin and Potsdam, Germany

After going to the "Thought Crime headquarters" and meeting Thomas' label partner, Jens, we met up with Peace of Mind at a record store. I sat in a nearby park writing while everybody else got their fix. Thankfully a few people wanted to walk around so we set off on a rather boring trek past loads of storefronts and ended up in a small park where we sat for a few minutes and talked. I told Agga I was looking forward to touring with some females.

At 5 we headed back to the record store to meet up with Todd and Yannick. Once they showed up about an hour later we all piled in the van and headed off with us following Peace of Mind to Potsdam. About half an hour later I hear Todd's voice, incredulous, "Hey, aren't we right by Thomas' apartment?" Ten

minutes later my own voice broke the silence, "Isn't that the record store over there?" We were obviously driving in circles.

Everything in Potsdam was covered with graffiti. Buildings were crumbling. I thought it was incredible looking. Carl and I tried to explore this wooded hill right behind the venue but unfortunately there was a fence all the way around it. Dinner was served around 9 and it was amazing! Pasta with a TVP and vegetable sauce, potatoes, more pasta with peanut sauce, some sort of mustard-based potato casserole, mock meatballs, bread and margarine spread mixed with chopped fresh herbs, a bunch of other stuff I can't remember and a fresh fruit salad. I came back to the table with my plate piled high. Carl shook his head. "We finally meet someone that eats as much as we do and it's a small girl." I looked around and noticed that the 5 of us had food overflowing our dishes while everybody else had just a normal plateful. We all went for seconds too. To think Jörn was with us for a whole week and we never knew what a master chef he was.

Ebola (Germany) played a pretty good set but I was feeling super tired for some reason and just sat hunched by the merchandise. I think His Hero is Gone had a kind of off night. I could tell they weren't as energetic as at previous shows and they played a lot of the slower songs. The audience was pitifully small—maybe 30 people. After the show we went to Jörn's squat. He warned us that there was no electricity. "How do you listen to all your records then?" asked Todd with a straight face.

Friday 24 April • Potsdam and Cottbus, Germany

Jörn made us an amazing breakfast: hummous, baba ghan-nouj, bread, millions of spreads, etc. Fuck, we were getting spoiled. I went upstairs near where I had slept and looked out the window at the backyard while I was waiting for the bathroom to become vacant. There was music blaring from a small boombox. I saw the makeshift table consisting of boards and a dislocated door covered with spreads, crumbs, plates, and cups in glorious disarray, Todd and Yannick playing air instruments and probably arguing about whether the band was good or not, Carl and a dog chasing each other around, and various clusters of people laughing and talking. I felt peaceful and content and in love with life.

We finally got the His Hero is Gone LPs. The artwork had been changed a bit on the back of the "Fifteen Counts of Arson" LP because one of the song titles had been missing on the original version and their address had changed. The song title was white and completely off-center and the new address was also white (the other text was a different color). They had a pretty good laugh over that one. That reminded me of the time I was photocopying the Arma Contra Arma 7" inserts and after 500 copies I realized that some of the cut and pasted lyrics were folded over so you couldn't read them. When I shamefully pointed it out to my friend who was in the band and putting out the record he just shrugged and said, "That's punk rock for you." I love it.

During the drive to Cottbus, Carl and I discovered that we

both had a love for Skipbo, a not-so-popular card game made by the same company that makes Uno. I remember having these little Skipbo parties at my house when I was in high school and playing it with a random group of other Skipbo fans during lunch breaks. At one point Paul and Yannick were saying they wished they had something to blow their noses with. I piped up from the loft, asking if they needed some toilet paper. "Oh yeah," Paul looked at Yannick, "I forgot we have the walking utility closet back there."

I couldn't believe it when we arrived at the venue. It was a small one-story building tucked in the woods with a river running next to it. Nearby some people were playing water polo in a pool. Paul and I went to go check it out. Standing at the edge of the pool were 2 ducks watching the game as well. They looked like they were hanging out and talking just like we were. I left for a little while and when I came back Paul said, "They're on some kind of mission." It took a while for what he said to register but then I saw the 2 ducks walking in the grass together side by side, occasionally looking at each other the way people do when they're walking somewhere and talking together.

Nobody seemed up for walking around so I headed off down a path by myself. About 25 yards up I spotted a really small snail making its way across the path. I hunkered down and watched it. I couldn't believe that people eat creatures like this with rubber-like feelers and trails of slime behind it. Jobst from Peace of Mind joined me in my observation of the snail. We saw a few people biking down the path so we decided to rescue the snail from an inevitable splattering. I picked it up, a little grossed out by the fact that the rocks touching it were stuck to it, and set it in the grass next to the path.

Once the snail was out of harms way Jobst and I, of like mind, headed up the path together. I can't remember what we talked about but we strolled and chatted peacefully for quite a while. Next to the path were rows and rows of nicely kept gardens and little garden houses. Eventually we stumbled upon a wildlife preserve and caught a glimpse of some wild boars. We turned back around shortly afterwards and as we neared the venue I saw Carl dragging some large branches behind him. Everybody pitched in gathering wood and we sat around the small fire eating some kind of tomato-based rice and vegetable stew.

Thomas came out and chatted with me for a while. I can't write our entire conversation down but as usual, he said several things that made me think. He said most Americans he'd met so far were really arrogant and apathetic. One of the things he attributed that—and Americans' attitudes in general—to was the fact that it has been over a hundred years since a war was fought on US soil whereas everybody's parents and grandparents in Europe can still remember what it was like to live through a war. I remember thinking during the Gulf War how strange it was that the war did not affect my life at all except that gas prices went up. I could not (and still can't) imagine the US actually being attacked or bombed. He also said I was the first American to ever ask to

learn a substantial amount of words in German. He said every other person from the US just expected everyone to know English. I gave myself a little pat on the back after that. Then the other Thomas came and sat next to me and we chatted until Stalker started their set.

For the first time on the tour I actually had a few beers this night since I wasn't feeling so sick any more. Peace of Mind sounded pretty good. His Hero is Gone were totally amazing. It broke their streak of shows that they were embarrassed about. I could tell that it cheered them all up and they were all in a goofy mood afterward. I wanted to stay there forever and just hang out but of course we had to leave pretty quickly. I fell asleep with a smile on my face.

Saturday 25 April • Poznan, Poland

We had breakfast on the roof with the sun beating down on us. From pretty much the beginning of tour we had been keeping each other amused by imitating sounds of different ways of being killed. Yannick related some obscure form of killing in which a tire splashed with gasoline was put around a person's neck or waist and set on fire. The rubber would melt and burn the person, eventually killing him/her. Fucking weird.

I went in the car with Jobst and Thomas and we had no trouble getting across the border but apparently Yannick needed a visa even though he'd called the embassy in Canada before the tour and they told him he didn't need one. Fucking typical; I hate dealing with those bureaucratic assholes.

I passed out in the car instead of getting a lesson in German. Bleary-eyed and tired we arrived at the Rozbrat squat in Poznan with plenty of time to spare. It was next to a Peugeot dealership and the people from the car-lot had to open their gate to let our van through which was quite funny. The space looked really cool. The entire outside wall of one of the buildings was covered with stencils, some of which were amazingly intricate.

The first band started off great, sounding really raw and sloppy just the way I like young punk bands. Throw in a few reggae beats and a lot more sloppiness and it went downhill after the first few songs. People were going nuts though, jumping around and screaming along with the lyrics. Yes! This was the kind of energy and craziness I'd expected from all the stories I heard about Poland from other bands that had passed through. His Hero is Gone played a good set but nobody really moved which disappointed me. I think people were a little confused by them not knowing exactly what to think or how to react.

A few guys were walking around with a squirtgun and they sprayed me behind the merchandise table. They thought I was pissed because I didn't react and one of them came over saying that they were just joking around. I told him I wasn't mad, just tired from touring. A few minutes later he came up to me and asked why I looked so sad. He left and came back again with a bottle of juice he bought for me which I thought was totally sweet.

Some people had gotten up on stage after His Hero is Gone

and were doing some free-style rap. Various other people who obviously had no clue how to play music got up on stage and started jamming. It sounded fucking godawful but people were going crazy and dancing around. Awesome as it was its charm wore thin after about 45 minutes so I wandered outside. The guy Marian that had squirted me with the watergun came up to me and we started talking. The next thing I know there were 10 guys standing around me in a circle all trying to talk to me in broken English and interrupting each other with frantic gestures, laughter, and "Fuck you."

Eventually I ended up sitting in the small bar at the squat with a woman whose name I didn't know. We were sitting across from each other just smiling at each other because we couldn't communicate. Just then Carl walked in and we stayed up for a while talking. Since I didn't have a sleeping bag he offered me his coat again. I climbed up into a loft bed by the bar and fell asleep there next to Todd.

Sunday 26 April

At 1:00 I went to the town center with Jobst and Berty on a not-yet-but-almost desperate search for food. We found a Chinese restaurant tucked away inside a ring of sex shops and peepshows that was unfortunately closed. I'd been looking forward to some bums and boobs over fried rice. We finally came across a small grocery store that didn't even have vegetables and just bought bread and jam.

Everyone had gone out to play soccer so when we got back to the squat there was virtually no one there. We sat around scrabbling in the dirt and playing ping-pong. Agga taught me backgammon which I always thought was an old person's game but actually found it to be quite fun. Everybody came back and I made a feeble attempt at teaching Todd backgammon.

There was quite a lot of confusion regarding what we were supposed to do next. There was a possibility of playing with Homomilitia at their house or staying at the squat another night. Since Rozbrat had no running water and the bathroom was overrun with shit, globular puke, and liquid puke mixed with piss and since Homomilitia rules, the ideal option was clear. Unfortunately it was not to be realized and it was settled that Peace of Mind would play.

All of us headed into town again for some grub. On the way to a supposedly 24 hour convenience store we came across that bastion of Western civilization—McDonald's. We made the usual comments about McDonald's and Coke taking over the world and went inside to take advantage of the only thing McDonald's is good for—clean bathrooms. Todd said he absolutely refused to go in but I think he eventually caved in. I was amazed by how dirty my hands had gotten in just one day. We walked to a nearby bakery that had just closed but had customers still inside. We peered in, hoping to be able to go in when the other people left. After about 15 minutes of waiting, one of the employees opened the

door and handed us a huge bag of bread. Fuck, we totally lucked out. About a fourth of it was these rolls with hot dogs in them so we put them in a separate bag to avoid "contamination." I guess the woman felt sorry for us the way most people feel sorry for mangy mutts with bad legs. We had to be scaring some people—9 people with weird hair, fucked up filthy clothes, smelling not so rosy fresh, and well, I think Todd just scares most people anyway on his own. We also stopped and bought about 20 bottles of water and 10 minutes later I realized when I looked at the label that it was a fucking Coke product. Bastards. You just can't escape them.

This was Agga's hometown so she wanted to show us around. We went into the town center where there was a little square and some amazing old buildings that were being cleaned up. I personally thought they looked much better old and dirty. A few of us got cotton candy and I realized for the first time where its name comes from. One guy not far away started playing acoustic tunes while another guy sang. I think they were doing Led Zeppelin songs and the singer was bellowing mightily, his voice echoing on the square. Seriously, it was difficult to have a conversation; his voice was so strong. A huge muscular guy got up in his face and he stopped singing until the guy left the area. When we passed by the musical duo I dropped some of the hot dog rolls into the hat they had sitting on the sidewalk.

Peace of Mind had to sound-check at 8 so we headed back after walking around a short while. Carl said that the night before he'd gone into the room he was to sleep in, flicking a lighter around trying to find a place to lay down that was free of dog and human shit. When he finally found a clear spot and tried to sleep a bunch of drunk people stumbled in, flopped down everywhere in the shit and some started making out so he just stayed up all night walking around. Poor guy.

While we ate we heard the first band's sound-check. The band consisted of 2 guitars and a drum machine. They were terrible. Todd and I settled down for a game of chess. I was glad to play someone that was pretty much the same level as me—we were both decent players but made a lot of dumb mistakes. He won one game and I won one before we had to quit because the flashlights were going dim. I had to take a piss and while I was squatting over the putrid black, yellow, and brown bowl one of the flashlights fell out of my pocket and splashed onto the floor. I dared not touch it so I just left it there to collect bacteria and scum.

During Peace of Mind Carl and I talked to this guy from Germany that was touring with the Greek band that was playing that night, Stateless in the Universe. He said they were also touring with Post-Regiment. I told Todd and he freaked out, pulling out a map and the red folder of all the His Hero is Gone tour information to try to figure out how they could go see them. He concocted a crazy plan to play the show the next day in Chorzow as early as possible and then drive 200 km on slow roads to the Post Regiment show. He said he'd driven 18 hours to see bands before so he didn't give a shit—he'd do anything to see them. He

even called the promoter of the show in Chorzow to see if His Hero is Gone could play first.

I watched Stateless in the Universe play until I started feeling kind of faint and curled up in the van with Carl's coat. At 3 in the morning I could still hear music blaring from the bar with all the drunk punks singing along. Man, those people knew how to have a good time.

Monday 27 April • Chorzow, Poland

This guy Martin who does Malarie Records came with us so the merchandise and gear pile grew ever larger. I traded places with Agga and got a little German lesson from Berty, learning all the key swears and insults you need to get by. About an hour down the road we passed a bus stop and saw 2 of the girls from Rozbrat that had been at the squat when we left. Weird. The Polish countryside was much more beautiful than I expected it to be with lots of green and various sparkling bodies of water. On the 2-lane highway cars were passing each other with no regard to traffic in the other lane. Martin called this "driving Polish style." The roads were smooth but curvaceous and the going was slow so Todd kept zooming past any vehicle going slower than 70 km/hr. We couldn't see anything in the little Peace of Mind car and had some near accidents. After one particularly death-defying turn/near accident Berty suddenly slammed on the brakes and Jobst jumped out of the car and ran back 30 seconds later. Just before I heard the door close I heard a faint squeak of the rubber chicken that had flown out of Jobst's hand onto the street. It was pretty hilarious that we risked losing the His Hero is Gone van in order to retrieve that fucking thing.

Once in Chorzow we stopped at a flat to eat dinner. I headed first for the bathroom and when I walked into the room where everybody was eating I noticed a lot of bewildered looks. Todd handed me his plate. "Here, you can have this." I looked down at the plate and saw a big pile of boiled cabbage and some other sauerkraut looking stuff in a runny orange colored sauce. It resembled in taste and appearance a certain type of Korean kimchi so I merrily ate away but I could understand the apprehension of the others. It definitely would have been a lot better with some rice.

Since everyone was in a hurry to play and go see Post-Regiment we left after about 15 minutes. We drove in a big circle and stopped to pick someone up. Two minutes later we stopped again and someone else jumped in the van. A minute went by and we stopped to pick up some cables. Finally we left for the club. Once we got there we immediately loaded everything out—no dicking around for once. I quickly set up the merchandise which now included cassette versions of both His Hero is Gone LP's. Most music for sale in Poland is cassettes from what I understand because they're so much cheaper.

I watched about 2/3 of His Hero is Gone's set and they were fucking amazing—one of the top 2 shows they played so far for sure. I got to catch some of the crazy Polish action I'd been

expecting to see—people launching themselves into the air and flailing all of their body parts around like they were covered with ants. Aside from capoeira that was the most amazing thing I've seen at a punk show. During Peace of Mind I met and chatted with Michal of Nikt Nic Nie Wie who did the His Hero is Gone cassettes. "So," he said with an expectant smile, "I hear you're from Mexico." I looked at him. "What?" "That's what Martin told me." I looked at Martin. "Someone from Poznan told me that. I guess it was just a rumor." Hmm... Todd went into a frenzy trading His Hero is Gone t-shirts with people for old Polish punk shirts. By the time Peace of Mind was finished it was already 9:30 so we (thankfully) ditched the idea of going to the Post-Regiment show. I don't think any other bands played.

As Todd was making a final shirt trade Carl, looking a bit flustered, came up and said there were only 3 people standing by the van and that they were probably going to get their asses kicked. I remembered that earlier the people at the club wouldn't let Martin and Carl leave to get a cup of coffee because it was too dangerous so I grabbed some of the merchandise and went out to the van. As we were loading up I heard, "Uh oh, here they come." I looked up and saw about 15-20 Nazi-looking types coming toward the parking lot wielding chains and baseball bats. Fuck. I ran inside the club to tell people to come outside but most of them didn't move. I went back outside and grabbed a bottle. I was getting flashbacks to what happened to me in Brazil and my heart started racing. There was a little bit of a hullabaloo but then they left. We loaded the van up in a hurry just tossing shit in as quickly as possible but before we could leave they came back.

Todd and Yannick told everybody to get in the van so I scrambled in. After a few minutes I got back out to see what was going on. I saw a young blond woman heatedly arguing with some of the thugs and a few feet away Agga doing the same thing. There really was nothing we could do except wait and see what happened. One of the assholes was saying shit like, "I want to put my dick inside you, bitch," to Agga and all of a sudden grabbed her and kissed her face roughly. Someone held her back before she could punch him and another fuckhead started getting in her face. I really thought some punches would be thrown at this point. When I saw people running and bodies moving around like they were being pushed I thought for sure a fight had broken out. By the time I caught up with the crowd of people some were already being dragged away and/or held back. One of the nazi fucks came up to Judith and I saying a bunch of shit in Polish, pulled his dick out, and shook it at us. I was absolutely disgusted and repulsed but tried not to show it as I'm sure that's what he wanted. Then they all started sieg-heiling and heil Hitler-ing and left. My pulse slowed while we sat around discussing what had just happened and trying to make sure Agga was OK. I told her briefly about what happened to me in Brazil and said she could talk to me at any time if she wanted to. At one point someone said, "At least we're going to be able to drive away. These people have to stay and live with it."

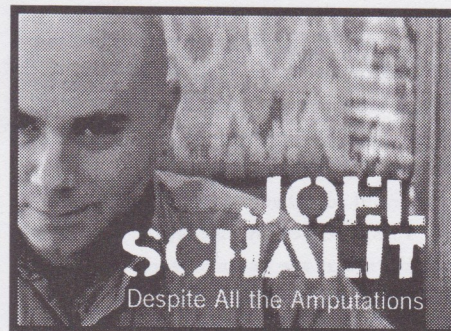
Nobody said anything for a while.

Since hanging around in the parking lot waiting for them to come back again with more people wasn't a very attractive option we left soon afterwards. We went back to the same apartment we went to earlier to eat more bigos, the cabbage stuff, before Michal had to leave to meet someone at a pub. He was going alone so I said I'd walk with him. We were walking in some dodgy looking areas but he said they were safe. At the pub he told me that they'd put on a benefit show there for a guy that was accused of attacking a nazi. The recipient of the benefit was on a tram on his way to the show when some nazis waiting on a platform spotted him. They ran behind the tram to the next stop where they boarded and beat the crap out of him in front of everybody.

After probably an hour of hanging out at the pub and walking around we finally got back to Adam's flat. I don't know how it began but people started looking through the distro stuff and we conducted a midnight session of true DIY consumerism (haha). We stayed up for probably another hour and a half just talking about music. Michal told us that a long time ago he'd wanted to put out a 7" by Armia. A friend of his went to an Armia show to pick up the DAT but had gotten so wasted that he lost his bag with the DAT in it. Incredible. Finally around 3 Michal left and I huddled on the floor with Martin and fell asleep.

Next stop: Prague. More to come next issue.

As of this writing I don't have an address but still have email. kimbae1@yahoo.com



I Dream of Turkey

I looked at my watch. It was two o'clock in the morning. I couldn't tell whether it was a

dream or not. But I could remember telling her that I wasn't interested in having sex. Yet, there she was, her beautiful body exhausted, covered in sweat. It was then that I realized what had happened. I wasn't dreaming. I'd been raped while I was sleeping.

As I extricated myself from Fatima's post-orgasmic embrace, I looked down and saw that at least she'd had the courtesy to put a rubber on. I grabbed my tee-shirt and used it to pry the condom off. "What an idiot," I whispered to myself. "I should have never agreed to sleep here." But Fatima exhorted me to at least crash on her couch.

It was only our second date, and I'd insisted on playing it chaste. Fatima cooked us a traditional Turkish dinner of tripe soup, and regaled me with tales of being locked in a closet as a

child, while being forced to read the collected works of Marx and Engels by her Communist Party member older sister.

I couldn't believe my fortune. Of all the things to have happen my first semester in graduate school, two thousand miles away from home. And to think, the woman that raped me was writing her dissertation on the war in Bosnia. My head spun. I had to get the hell out of there.

I slowly slipped my pants on and laced my boots. I closed the door and made my way towards my truck. As I drove down Bloor street, I took note of all the shuttered storefronts lining the sidewalk: Italian cafés, Jamaican roti parlors, Arab restaurants, Russian kitsch vendors, Portuguese bakeries, and Anglophone donut shops.

As comforting as this inclusive display of immigrant capitalism was to me, a perennially nomadic Israeli-American, on his sixth country in twenty-five years, this was still no Silk Road. I had this sensation that within all of this ethnic pluralism there was still no place for me. Screw Canada, I thought. Everyone continues to get taken advantage of here. Not just metaphorically. Literally.

As I turned left on Ossington Street, my lips started to tremble. I fumbled through a bag full of cassettes that I'd brought up from Berkeley, and stuck the first thing I could find in the tape deck. All of the sudden The New Bomb Turks' singer Eric Davidson began to scream "We bang our heads on the ground, what a crazy sound."

The coincidence totally unnerved. Panicking, I hit the eject button so hard I almost broke my finger. Nothing was going to provide any catharsis.

As I opened the door to my house, the silence terrified me. I felt horribly alone. I crawled into bed, wrapped the sheets tightly around myself, and tried to stop shivering. I had a lecture on Fascism I had to attend at nine AM the next morning. But now I was scared of going. Fatima would be there.

I lay in bed thinking about what had just happened. "Israelis and Turks are brothers," I recalled her saying over dinner. "We are neither Middle Easterners, nor are we Europeans. That's what unites us both. This is why we have to stick together."

I wondered if Fatima really understood how such a feeling of Eurasian collegiality played itself out in the real world. Wasn't what just transpired an example of what she was talking about? Didn't the Turks occupy Palestine for almost five hundred years? All of the sudden I became overcome by nausea. I got up and vomited. Finally, after expelling Fatima's tripe, I fell asleep.

I awoke at eleven am the next morning. I'd missed the lecture, but I was relieved. How could I have faced her? I walked into my office, and saw that the answering machine was beeping. There were four messages, three of which from Fatima.

The first one asked if I had gotten home okay. She explained that she hadn't heard me leave and wanted to know why. Fatima sounded a bit concerned. In her second message, she talked about how she wanted to go to Rosh Ha Shanah services together at a

local temple. In the third one, Fatima told me that she knew I was home and was on her way over. I looked at my watch. She'd be arriving any minute. I started to shake again. I took a deep breath and swore I'd tell her off.

The last message turned out to be from my father, who, to make matters even more awkward, had called from a hotel in Istanbul to wish me a happy New Year.

"Yoel," he said, "Your brother told me you were going out on a date with a Turkish woman, I hope it went really well. You know, Turks are a really noble people. When King Ferdinand kicked us out of Spain, the Sultan took us in. The Ottomans were much better at ruling Palestine than the British ever were."

Five years later I found myself flying over the Anatolian Peninsula on a family business trip. My father pointed out the Bosphorus to me, explaining that this was where Europe ended and the Middle East formally began.

I flashed back to that terrible night in Toronto and got a little freaked out. Seeing the expression on my face, my father touched my arm and said, "Look at it this way child. Instead of watching them cross the waterway to colonize us, this time it's we who are soliciting them."

A version of this column also appeared in the SF Bay Guardian.



I never got along that well with my dad. Okay, that's not completely true. When I was still too young to think for myself, I admired him

immensely. He had movie-star looks, a mysterious, dashing manner, and seemed to know the answer to everything.

But by the time I was eight or nine, I could sense something was wrong. I still desperately needed his approval and encouragement, but it was beginning to sink in that I would never be good enough. Still too young to understand that adults could have problems, too, I assumed that it was my fault, that something was terribly wrong with me. And unfortunately he never let me know otherwise.

Like many men his age, Dad was doubly cursed. He graduated high school in 1931, in the midst of the Great Depression. His father, despite having only a second grade education, had made a success of himself in the emerging automobile industry. But the Crash of 1929 wiped him out, and Dad had to abandon thoughts of college and go to work to support his parents.

Just when things were looking up, when he had finally started earning some money for himself, along came World War II. At an

age when most men would be establishing careers and families, Dad was dragged off to Europe for three and a half years of dodging Nazi bombs and bullets. By the time he got back to America in 1945, he was already into his 30s and faced with starting all over, dealing with the career choices and decisions that would normally confront someone of 18 or 20.

Understandably, he had grown more than a bit cynical, and that's the message that came down to me. Kids from more middle-class homes were promised, "You can do anything you dare to dream of." I was told, "The world is a dirty, nasty place run by bastards who will always get you in the end."

Along with this notion came a profound insecurity. What was the use of saving money? The banks could always fail again. Why bother trying for a better education or better position? Someone with more connections or less scruples would always come along and snatch the prize away.

It was the credo of the loser, and the only solace came from assuring oneself that those who appeared to be winning were somehow morally or esthetically deficient. Dad was—still is—a bitter man, and try as I might, I don't think I've fully purged myself of that same bitterness.

One of the worst things about feeling defeated by life is that we tend to take out our frustrations on others. I remember when I was at that young boy stage of wanting to do all sorts of fanciful things when I grew up. After seeing Ted Williams bounce a home run off the roof of Briggs Stadium, I made the mistake of confiding that I'd like to be a baseball player.

Dad snorted and smirked, and reminded me that I couldn't catch, couldn't hit, and had a bad habit of jumping out of the way when the ball came in my direction. He was right, of course; I would have been lucky to make it in Little League, let alone the big leagues.

But I was seven years old, that time of life when anything can and should be possible. What's the point of pissing on a little kid's dream? The point was, of course, that Dad's dreams hadn't come true, and one of his few consolations came from reminding others that theirs probably wouldn't either.

It was more of the same when I got older and started coming up with more realistic ambitions, like being a writer. "You'll never make any money doing that," was his response, "Besides, writers are a dime a dozen." From an early age my sister showed a phenomenal talent for both art and literature, but got no encouragement at all. "You'll never get anywhere with art unless you're really lucky and you know the right people." She retreated to her room, and eventually into something not far from madness.

Dad himself was actually a pretty decent painter and water colorist. If he'd kept at it, you might be looking at some of his work in galleries or museums today. But, as he never tired of telling us, he'd given up his "unrealistic" dreams of a career in art to take a more "practical" job with the Post Office, a job he hated and which ground his soul into dust.

This was how he showed his love for us, sacrificing his own

possibilities to provide security for his wife and children, and to be fair, it's hard to condemn someone for doing that. He was deeply Catholic, the kind of Catholic who practically revels in hardship and tragedy, who interprets every misfortune as an opportunity to show one's devotion to God, and is suspicious of anything resembling pleasure because it's probably some trick of the Devil.

I grew up thinking that Dad was one of the smartest men I'd ever met, and even when I went through the standard adolescent phase of hating him, I still admired his intellect, his left wing politics, his support for working people and his opposition to war and greed. It never occurred to me to wonder why he showed such compassion for humankind and yet so little of it trickled down into our emotionally impoverished household.

It wasn't until I'd been to college and lived on my own for many years that I realized Dad, while no dummy, was nowhere near as knowledgeable as I'd given him credit for. As he began to slip into old age, he rarely read anything new, rarely listened to anyone's ideas other than his own, and mostly repeated catch phrases and ideological cant that he'd learned decades before.

Now he's in his late 80s, hobbled by a broken leg and a broken shoulder which will never heal completely. He gets around only with great difficulty, and can't leave the house without someone at his elbow in case he should have another fall.

What's worse, and even more depressing, is the way his mind is going. As bossy and opinionated and obstreperous as he could be in his younger years, he was still capable of making interesting conversation, and when his biting, sarcastic wit was turned against the government or the ruling classes instead of us, he could be hilarious.

Now he struggles to form complete sentences, often forgetting what he started to say before managing to string three or four words together. In mid-thought, he'll pause for long moments as he tries to recall the name or place he wanted, then demand that we tell him the word he was looking for.

"You, know, come on, the whatchama.. thingamajig... Used to live down the street from whatisname..." When we admit we haven't any idea what he's talking about, he gets all the more frustrated, and wonders aloud why he's the only one in the family who ever seems to know anything.

Sometimes it's hard not to laugh at his befuddlement, but it's just as hard not to cry. I can look back at a lifetime of casual insults and putdowns, and yes, of course, it makes me angry, but I can't hold a grudge. He may be terribly, tragically flawed, but he's the only dad I'll ever have.

I've found, too, that while he has only a dim awareness of what's going on now, his mind quickly shifts back into focus when I can get him talking about things that happened 50 or 75 years ago. We can pore over road maps for hours as he shows me the route he took hitchhiking and hopping trains from Michigan to California the summer he was 16. He can tell me how as a five year-old, he almost died in the great flu epidemic of 1918. He still

knows the names of most of his first grade classmates and what they went on to do for a living.

It's an incredible window into the past, a past that most of us will only ever know from history books. He can remember before there was radio, when airplanes were still such a novelty that people ran outside to see them fly over, when you started your Model T by turning a crank, and horse-drawn carriages were still a common sight.

Get him talking about the past and all the argumentativeness and petulance disappears. He's like a wide-eyed little child again, and I can't help asking myself why he couldn't have always been like this.

The other day he'd been giving my mom a particularly hard time, and she was near tears. "Talk to him, please," she asked me. "I just need a break from listening to him. See if you can get his mind on to something else."

So I did, and I was rewarded with a story I'd never heard before. We were looking at maps again, trying to figure out whether a certain town he'd been in during the War was in Luxembourg, Belgium or France. Before I knew it, he was recounting a harrowing tale of driving trucks down an unlit road overlooking the Rhine River while German artillery shells came raining down all around him.

"We were in a convoy," he said, "and this idiot lieutenant in the truck ahead kept insisting that I follow right behind him. I didn't want to make any bigger of a target than we already were, so I stayed back as far as I could. A shell came along and blew him and his whole truck to bits. So it turned out it wasn't such a bad idea to disobey orders."

"On the way home, someone else was driving our truck and I was riding in the back. A shell landed nearby and the shrapnel hit our driver. Killed him. I had to take over driving the rest of the way."

I'd always thought Dad had spent the war far away from the front, helping to construct camouflage for the Army Corps of Engineers. This was the first time I'd ever heard a word about him seeing actual combat. I tried to put myself in his place, tried to imagine what it would feel like to be creeping along in the darkness knowing that at any instant I could be blown to bits.

"So there you were, sitting in the same driver's seat where someone else had just been killed," I said. "You must have been terrified. How did you handle that? Just keep telling yourself that maybe artillery shells are like lightning and don't hit twice in the same place?"

He laughed. "Well, something like that, I guess. Mostly I just kept my eyes on the road and drove and tried not to think too much about anything else."

I asked him about it several more times, tried to get him to describe in more detail a situation that I've never had to face and hopefully never will. But while he could tell me all the details of what happened, we both knew he wasn't going to talk about what it

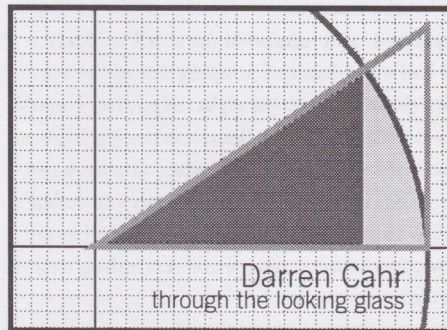
felt like. He made it sound like just another job, like sorting mail at the Post Office, only louder.

I was still curious about one thing, though. "How come you've never told me this stuff before?"

He sighed. "Well, you know, a lot of guys like to talk about what they did in the war, and to me it always ends up sounding like they're bragging. Besides, there are plenty of guys who had it a lot worse. I was lucky they didn't put me in the infantry. They'd go charging right into the German guns, and sometimes only one out of ten men would come back in one piece."

I looked at him wonderingly. Who was this man, I wondered, this soft-spoken, modest man who'd come within inches of death and yet didn't even want to talk about it for fear people would think he was showing off? The same man, I realized, who'd devoted most of his life to taking care of others. I understood why he speaks so wistfully of that trip to California in 1929; it was one of the last times he was able to do something just for himself.

The irony and the tragedy of it all is that if he'd just been the tiniest bit more selfish, given just a bit more time and energy to caring for himself, not only could he have been a much happier man, but could also have done a far better job of caring for his family. Yes, Dad, we appreciated the three square meals a day, and the roof over our heads, but we would have been far richer if you'd also saved a little hope and a few dreams for yourself. That's the greatest inheritance you could have passed on to us.



I first realized that I was, in fact, the greatest musician of all time when I was two years old. I had stolen a car—my parents' car, actually—and was

driving up the Santa Monica Freeway, when I saw a sign advertising Guitar Center. It was a bit difficult to steer the old Buick off the highway (being that I was two years old, and could only reach the pedals by jumping down from the seat, pushing the pedal, and then climbing back up to steer), but I managed. I pulled up to the Guitar Center and walked unsteadily inside.

I was instantly overwhelmed with guitars, acoustics and electrics and flying V's and every other kind of guitar under the sun. I toddled up to a Les Paul Custom, and rendered a note-perfect version of Yngwie Malmsteen's epochal version of Paganini, which of course had not yet been composed (Malmsteen being a then unknown fourteen year old acne ridden Swedish theology student). Needless to say, the store came to a halt. I was signed immediately by an passing A&R rep to a contract with

Atlantic records, and put out the first of several solo albums before I entered kindergarten.

Of course, this was 1970, and much of the music I had been exposed to was Led Zeppelin and James Taylor. While my second album *Still in Diapers!* entered the charts at number 17, I felt empty inside. The music I composed, while flashy, left me cold. The scrawl of "Cahr is God" on bathroom walls made me feel no better. The music wasn't with me—it had no passion. The cool perfectionism of my early years (4-7) was a miserable time in my professional life.

Of course, this all changed in 1975 when, at the age of seven, I saw the Ramones at CBGB in New York. I was moved, swore never to play another guitar solo again, and moved into a squat in Alphabet City with several drug dealers and a former prostitute working on her Ph.D. thesis at NYU. These were heady times, seeing the Bush Tetras at the Mud Club followed by a few lines of coke on some upper east side glass table. Oh, to be eight years old again!

My next album was, of course, a complete departure. Using members of several local street gangs, I put out the infamous *Punk as Fuck* LP, which (while wildly influential) sold only 17 copies. Disappointed, I moved back in with my parents, and returned to grammar school.

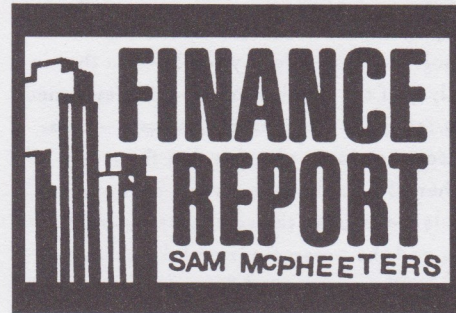
After several years underground (actually, on the playground) I rejoined the musical world with an appearance on Gang of Four's seminal *Semen!* album. The notices encouraged me and, now aged twelve, I began recording with a drum machine in my basement while wearing copious amounts of eyeliner, putting out a number of post-punk classics such as "Don't Rear The Freaper!" and "Dead People Live in My Head."

After spending several years as a paid advisor to Robert Smith and Siouxsie Sioux (my hair was used as a pancake makeup applicator), I realized that my "street cred" was at an all time low. Seeing a new trend, and now old enough to drive, I joined a funk punk group, became socially aware, and learned to rap. I moved to Los Angeles, put my hair in dreads, and soon had a number one hit with a remake of a Stevie Wonder tune.

Then, my drug phase hit. At the age of 17 I was out on the streets doing crack rock. I was rescued when a street preacher helped me find Jesus. Soon, I joined a liberation theology/Marxist commune, became a guest guitar player for Nirvana, and hit the road.

Not long after opening for Rage Against the Machine, I was recommended for sainthood by the Catholic Church. The inconvenient fact that I was Jewish was explained away—Jesus, after all, was a Jew as well.

Needless to say, my presence in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is nearly guaranteed. Every cliché, they say, has its basis in fact. My facts have a basis in cliché. Tell me my way isn't a hell of a lot better?



LOOPHOLE!

The 2000 *Forbes* billionaires list is just in and it's another nasty yawn. It wasn't always this way.

Where is the villainy? All these high-tech success stories are looking more & more alike—a big dad convention. Doughy Microsoft underlings, harmless, apple-cheeked financiers, sensibly dressed tech wizards...not a one of these guys is up to the role of snarling arch fiend. Closest we got was Oracle founder Larry Ellison, a distant #2 by *Forbes'* count, whose obsessively groomed facial hair was starting to resemble the stage paint of some hack Shakespearean villain. These days he's clean shaven, trying to kick the corporate espionage and trying to make a good impression as he edges in on that elusive 12 digit bank account. What happened to the orphan enslaving oil barons and meat-packing railroad tyrants? Where are the top hats and cigars? Where are the giant asses? Where the hell are the scowling WAXED MUSTACHES??

I really do expect more from the trillionaires list. I may be getting that list earlier than expected. A bright California entrepreneur named Dennis Hope has—through a little loophole in international law—claimed legal ownership of the moon. His company, Lunarestates, sells parcels of lunar real estate on the internet for about 1 cent an acre. For good measure, this guy went and filed a Declaration of Ownership at the United Nations for all other property in our solar system—eight planets and 51 moons total. This brings his paper worth to \$763 trillion at current market rates (Hope's own prices, having cornered the market), which would make him *over 14,000 times richer than Bill Gates*. "Would," that is, if Lunarestates can hurtle a little matter of international derision. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs writes off Hope as a pathetic crank. Low prices (\$15.99 for a deed, \$29.95 for a "lunar estates" t-shirt) and overall cheddar factor rates the venture as a novelty act far below UN radar—the legal equivalent of someone laying claim to the aurora borealis, or the letter J.

Still, Hope's loophole has legs. Here's how it works. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the first in a series of cold war scientific pacts with cool names (like the Astronaut Rescue Agreement, and the Convention Governing The Registration Of Objects Launched Into Outer Space) specifically states that all of outer space is the communal property of all nations on Earth and "not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty." Mentioned nowhere in the OST is commercial

ownership, which Hope jumped on in 1980 as his legal foothold. This loophole was closed four years later in the Moon Treaty, but only 6 of the 185 UN member states signed it. The US refused to ratify for these precise reasons—pressure from American corporations, who felt that the treaty could be potentially harmful to the free market economy of the future. Space law is made from the same stuff as treaties covering the open sea and the ocean floor and Antarctica. Certain areas are deemed “res communis”—property of all humanity—and certain areas are “res nullis”—unclaimed territory, first come/first serve. Most developing countries push for communis on these matters, since only the rich nations have the technology to explore and exploit these areas. The moon is legally res communis, with shades of ambiguity. The irony here is that the “common heritage of mankind” approach is what made Dennis Hope a potential trillionaire—if res nullis had been applied, all that virgin extraterrestrial property would’ve long since been divvied up between Uncle Sam and Ford, GE, Monsanto and Microsoft.

Ok, right. The guy’s odds of a full jackpot are probably on par with my odds of shooting out the neon G in the Black Angus Steak House sign while passing on the freeway at 70MPH...file under Dare To Dream. But my dreams aren’t pegged to international precedent. These rules regarding shared areas are very much works in progress—occasional tectonic shifts in international law breed bizarre winners. As the pace of technology, globalization and high-stakes audacity picks up, more and more of the planet’s hidden or previously neutral crags and resources are coming due for harvest. Dennis Hope’s hopes, for example, may get a boost in the next decade by the fight to privatize drinking water. Buried in the WTO and NAFTA provisions are specific clauses to reclassify drinking water as a marketable commodity, same as lumber and motor oil. This isn’t speculation. Sun Belt Water of California is in the process of suing Canada for \$468 million under NAFTA guidelines—British Columbia’s ban on wholesale water exports, it turns out, is illegal under the new trade guidelines. Technologies are under development to tote massive orders of drinkable water across the globe to the highest bidder. Supertankers have been refitted to haul Alaskan glacier water to China for bottling in “free trade” zones. With worldwide water demand doubling every twenty years, impending scarcity on the golf courses of the first world (and the wells of the third) makes this “the next acquisition frontier.” Ironically, the new anti-globalization movement could speed the water marketers towards a full frontal attack against a cornerstone of res communis. Three quarters of the Earth’s fresh water is locked up in polar ice. All that untapped merchandise, tantalizingly out of bounds under current law, is going to look more and more appealing as multinationals factor in the lack of howling protesters in the upper latitudes.

The science to haul icebergs exists. All that’s left is to modify that pesky res communis rule in the legal world. And I can think of several pink, wrinkled southern senators that’d be more than happy to “amend” a few more international treaties on the U.S.’s behalf.

Meanwhile, a company called SpaceDev plans to land a probe on a near-Earth asteroid in 2002 and claim ownership under the same loophole. If the US decides to contest this claim, SpaceDev will still have time to establish a corporate identity in Tonga, the Cayman Islands or some other investor friendly tax haven and stake a claim from abroad. A brouhaha over one insignificant Little Prince fiefdom would result in the exact kind of international conflict all these space treaties were designed to avoid. Who would take the time and cash to challenge them? An asteroid is, after all, just a chunk of rock. It could be filled with rubies and grandfather clocks and there’d still no way to haul any of it back. Precedent will be established and the next asteroid will be that much easier to claim. Rule of law moves in small and mysterious increments. A legal model on one hunk of rock eventually means something for larger hunks of rock. Only a generation ago, nodes of magnesium ore on the vast, spooky plains of the Pacific were as useless to us as solid ruby asteroids. Today large scale ocean floor mining operations are only years away. A break with brittle Latin laws in one desolate realm eventually means a break on less distant realms.

One of these brazen clowns is going to strike it rich. A new era of Snidley Whiplash zillionaires will rise from the ashes of the doughy software dads. Lunarestates demands a UN seat for their constituents. “I hope that when Donald Trump dies,” Dennis Hope says, “he’ll be known as ‘The Dennis Hope of the Earth’.” Spain and Portugal pulled this Giant Ass Of Man swindle back in 1529 and it only got them big chunks of Latin America. ©

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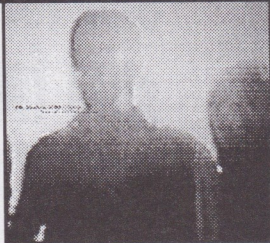
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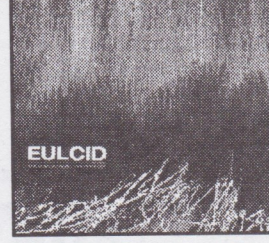
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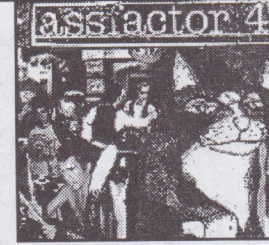
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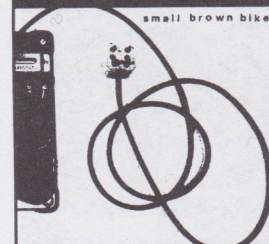


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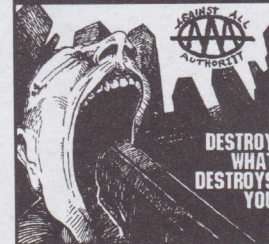


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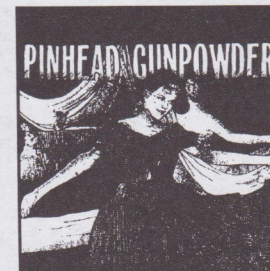


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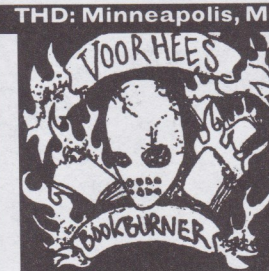
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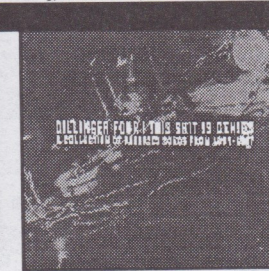
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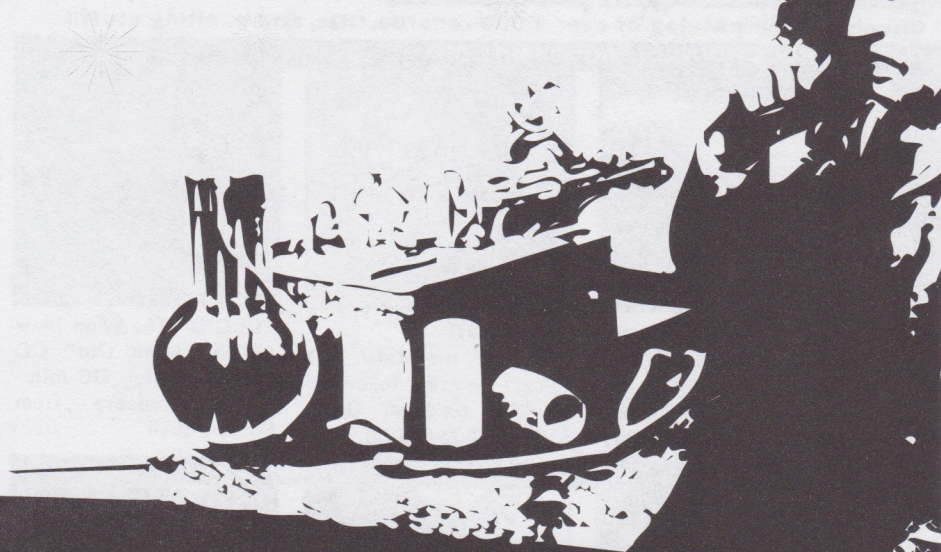


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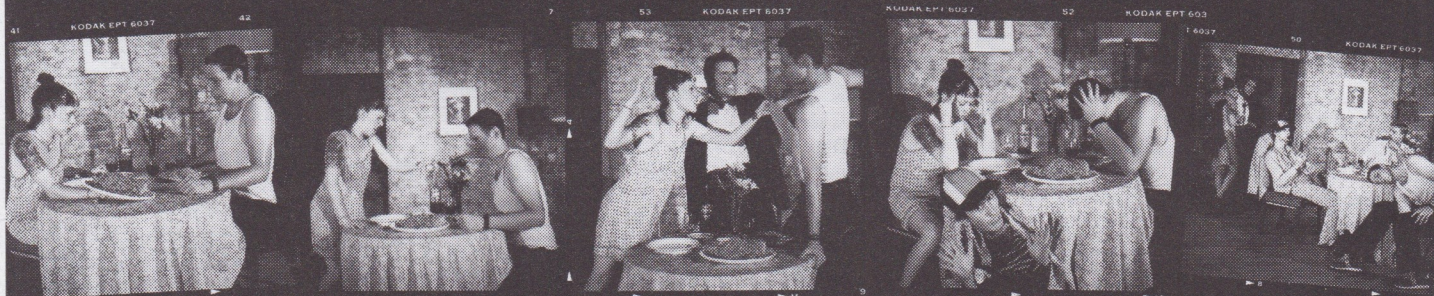
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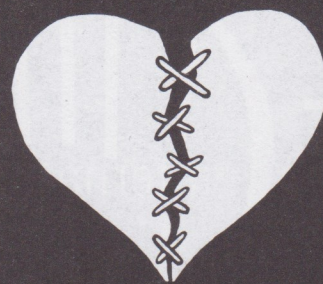
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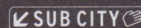
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line. This is where art and politics meet and kick ass together—no more $1 + 1 = 2$ simplistic slogans, no more pedantic songs played by joyless theoryheads.

The (International) Noise Conspiracy have attracted attention for their uncompromising anti-capitalist politics, as well as their contradictory decision to release records on the quasi-major Epitaph. I spoke with Dennis

and Lars about the challenges of making music in a commodified culture, and moving on from the legacy of former bands (TINC boasts former members of Refused and Doughnuts). Rather than repeat the political critique put forth in their songs, we focused on tactics: using satire in social critique, bringing passion back into leftist politics, and combating postmodern alienation with punk rock.

Interview with Dennis Lyxzen and Lars Strömberg by **Jon Strange**



the (international) NOISE conspiracy

I know that several of you were in other bands before, and all of those bands sounded pretty different from The (International) Noise Conspiracy—certainly Refused did. What motivated you to try a different sound?

Lars: Well, for the challenges. Dennis and I were discussing this band for the past three years, while all those other bands were still around. We wanted to play '60s punk rock, like Sonics covers, and make it really political. We wanted to sound like the Sonics and talk like Karl Marx or Guy Debord.

Dennis: There are certain limitations to what all of our bands did before, because they were rooted in screamy aggressive punk rock, and youth-culture movements. A lot of times music becomes a place for the bourgeois and the middle class to dwell in. But rock music is the music for the people. My dad never read a book in his life. He's not into jazz, or classical music, he likes rock music. So we fused two disparate elements, juxtaposing them in a way that may be challenging for people. It will allow them to recognize the universal appeal of rock music, and then all of a sudden, we'll start talking like Karl Marx, which is not common in rock music.

Not only does it challenge people who are into rock music, but don't read Marx, Debord, etc.—but it also challenges people who do read these theorists, but don't relate to this kind of music.

Dennis: A lot of times, when you get to the point where you read that kind of stuff, a lot of people turn to the avant-garde. We hate the avant-garde. It's the biggest bunch of bullshit, bourgeois, self-serving crap. We just wanted to play music that everyone could be a part of, even though the ideas we're into are radical and intellectual. We still want it to be music that everybody could recognize.

It's interesting—you talk about making this both accessible and challenging, at the same time.

Dennis: That's the plan.

Lars: We like the element of surprise.

Dennis: Exactly. We like the element of surprise. We get up on stage, get people dancing to the songs, and then we have them in a headlock while we talk about our politics.

Do you feel like you're held to a certain standard due to your experience in Refused, or with other bands?

Dennis: No, I mean, with this band we hope to just be a band, without being a part of any particular scene, and see where it takes us. Everyone we know is rooted in this scene somehow, and these ideas are really important to us, so we want to get them out there in any way we can. Unfortunately when you concentrate on the punk scene, you're only speaking to punks. We just want to play to anyone that's interested. We're definitely a punk band—that's clear—but we've played with the weirdest bands, just because we can.

So you think you're more accessible now?

Lars: Yeah, we get to play to all kinds of crowds, and all kinds of genres. We've played in really huge festivals in Sweden, punk squats in Germany—we play with anybody and for anybody, which we hadn't done before in our previous bands. That's a challenge for us: to be the same band no matter who we're playing in front of.

Dennis: It works out fine. With this band we're definitely taking a step back, musically. I think it turned out better than we expected, almost unintentionally.

Well musically, you aren't punk—not in a traditional sense. But you also aren't just a rock

band, or a '60s-style garage band. You're punk kids playing that kind of music, and that interpretation sounds very different.

Dennis: We're not interested in retro—we don't want to be a retro band. We want to pick sounds and ideas that are interesting, which we find all over the place. A lot of music that was spawned in the '60s, '70s and '80s, we totally rip off and try to be creative with it.

Lars: You could make a long list of the things we ripped off.

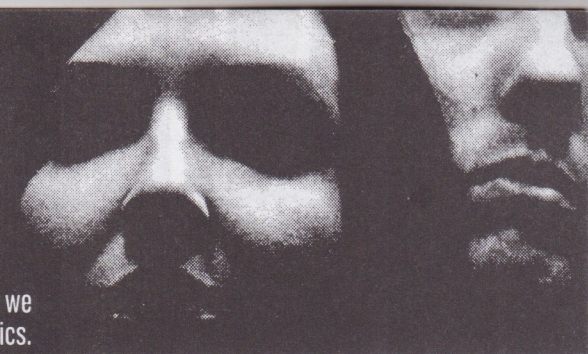
Dennis: We don't claim originality. So many bands want to be original, and creative and new, but we just steal from everyone!

Lars: We have all these old fragments of music that we use with important ideas of socialism. It's all about the context. If you take originality within punk and hardcore, it would soon consist of just not playing at all. That's the furthest step we can take.

Your songs address the global power of corporations. This is an issue that has occupied the focus of the radical left over the past couple of years. Coming to the United States—the birthplace of that level of corporatization—have you seen a higher level of that kind of corporate culture than at home in Sweden?

Dennis: Interesting . . . I would say that the subversive culture in Sweden is very radical. There's a lot of crazy shit going on. On the other hand, there's a lot going on in America right now—we can feel it in the air. It wasn't that way when I was here four years ago with Refused. We talked about politics and no one cared! We've been here for two weeks, and kids come up to us every night really excited about radical politics.

Lars: People recognize it more, with the



We get up on stage, get people dancing to the songs, and then we have them in a headlock while we talk about our politics.

mass protests going on, in Montreal recently, in Washington, and in Seattle. People can recognize what we're talking about because they've seen this in the streets.

Part of that comes from us making radical politics more "sexy" and more appealing to people.

Dennis: That's totally part of our plan: to make politics sexy. The left has been so fucking caught up in the Puritan moralism of self-sacrifice. You don't have people going to political meetings with a sense of excitement—people treat it like a burden. We want to have a sense of passion about radical ideas and politics, to make them sexy, entertaining, fun, and beautiful!

I think that's something that's been done by radicals in other parts of the world, but not in North America, and not in Europe—these places feel really sterile.

Dennis: Definitely very sterile. There's all these rules about how to go about being political. We get tons of shit because we're not . . .

Lars: . . . because we're not abiding by the political dress code.

Dennis: If we want these political issues to come out to popular culture, there's no right or wrong way to do it. It's the very dogmatic people that insist there is a right way to do it. This is our approach to radical politics, and if you have another approach, then go for it! The ideas that we're talking about need to be everywhere, all of the time. You can't just have a small fraction of the world get into it—it has to be everywhere.

In your newest album, you acknowledge, "the creative process is bastardized into a sculpted edifice of consumerism." With that stated so boldly, I'm curious as to why you participate in this consumerist process: touring the country and selling records and T-shirts.

Dennis: Let me explain what we mean by that line. We want to show people the emotions and feelings we have when we create music. A lot of people let musicians and movie stars live the creative parts of their lives for them. They let themselves be bought—they pay money to go to the show and that's their contribution. You buy in on those emotions instead of living those emotions yourself. But yeah, we realize that we're a huge paradox. We talk a bunch of shit and then do the opposite.

Lars: But we're as much a paradox as anyone else. As a popular example: the DIY kid who puts out records himself, or screens his own T-shirts, he still has to get money somewhere. So say he gets a job somewhere to pay for all that. The money still comes from capital, one way or another. We're taking a more direct approach, prostituting ourselves in a more obvious way.

In a capitalist economy and society, that compromise is made, of course. But you say that too many people rely on movies, on musicians, to live the creative parts of their lives for them. How does it affect you as a musician to charge money from people so they can see you perform?

Dennis: For us, we like to play music and we like to travel, and so we're taking advantage of the things that we like to do. We're being pragmatic about how to get our politics out. We use it the same way you use your car to get to a demonstration. And that's the general idea behind it. We just want to inspire people the same way that we were inspired by the Dead Kennedys or Born Against. And then when people read our booklets, or see us play, our hope is that they themselves do something exciting with it.

Lars: The entire record-selling process is

a necessary evil to use that vehicle.

Do you feel like that necessary evil makes it less fun for you? Or corrupts the experience for you?

Lars: From time to time it feels like that does corrupt it, because of the boring business end.

Dennis: It is kind of boring—one of the things that will break up a band, is that instead of just playing music and being a band, all of a sudden you have to become an accountant. That fucks a lot of bands up. It's what happened with Refused—after being together for seven years, all we would talk about at band meetings was money. And it sucks. So we let other people handle the money for us, so we can concentrate on making music, and enjoy ourselves.

We all make compromises all the time. I'm not looking to point the finger at anyone and call them a hypocrite—I want to look at what compromises people make, and how they choose to make them. I think that's a real measure of integrity.

Dennis: A lot of times, people point out to us what we're doing wrong, tell us we shouldn't be on a label like Epitaph Records, which is fine. But we're intelligent people; we think about these issues a lot. All of the decisions are made as a band, so that the compromises that we make feel acceptable.

Your album liner notes refer to "the construction of distinctions and hierarchies, which confine the potential of the creative process." Do you feel like the punk scene contributes to constructing those hierarchies?

Dennis: In any way that society as a whole does. Even though the punk scene is a bit better than the rest of society in not putting people on too high of a pedestal, we still have the scenesters, the good looking kids,

the (international) NOISE conspiracy

the richer kids, the kids who have met more famous people, or toured more times, and it inevitably becomes a hierarchy.

Do you think The (International) Noise Conspiracy can be defined as a punk band?

Dennis: Definitely. We're punk kids. This is the scene we come from. Every kid I know, all around the world, is connected to the punk scene in one way or another. It's a scene that we still belong to, even if our music is a little more loosely defined now. If you trace the history of punk rock backwards—which we started to do—asking: "Who did the Sex Pistols listen to?" We got into the Small Faces and the Who, and worked all the way back to Bo Diddley and the blues. All the stuff that we're into, all the music that we steal from is punk rock—just from different eras.

I think the punk scene has gotten a lot more conservative, musically—in the United States especially, more so than Europe.

Dennis: Something you can see in the punk scene is how fast trends come. One of the things that happened in Sweden that's really fuckin' weird is that there's a whole new generation of straightedge kids that don't listen to hardcore at all! They wear black eyeliner and tight pants, and they're all straightedge. You meet people who say they're straightedge, and they listen to pop music. People like us get blamed for introducing a lot of that look, since we're straightedge too, but we wear '60s mod-style clothing.

Lars: It's a funny shift of appearance.

Getting back to your new album, you say: "[Alienation] is total . . . There is a practical manner in which we can combat total alienation—using its means against itself." How are you doing that?

Dennis: When we play, we try to invoke a

passion that will overcome that sense of alienation. If you're a kid into politics but feel alone and alienated in the world, our hope is that you come to our show and see that you're not alone. You can see that other people are into these ideas. We hope to inspire people to do something other than simply survive. Even if it's only for that half-hour, we want to give people a feeling that there's something exciting going on. It's the only way we can combat alienation. We want to shake people up, and make them have a good time—there's no reason you shouldn't have that kind of fun all the time! It should always be like that! We want to give people the kick to be creative.

As punk kids get older, they've been to so many shows; I think it takes a lot to get that spark of excitement for them. I think creating that sense of belonging is an important part of that. Do you feel like being a band that embraces such a hip look and sound is a way to give your audience a sense of inclusion in a cool and exciting subculture, or do you think it works to exclude them by making them feel like they aren't cool enough?

Dennis: Oh no, I think it could be a bit of both—it's the risk we take. We didn't set out to be the cool kids, you know? People come to our shows and are down with what we're doing, but at the same time, someone could look at the fact that we all wear suits on stage and be put off because they aren't into wearing suits, or don't think they look cool enough.

Lars: But for the most part, I think it makes people curious—they want to figure out what our story is, and I think it breaks down the barrier a little.

Dennis: The rock myth is so strong, that people seriously believe that if you play in a band, you are a rock star. I mean, we met so many people who are surprised that they

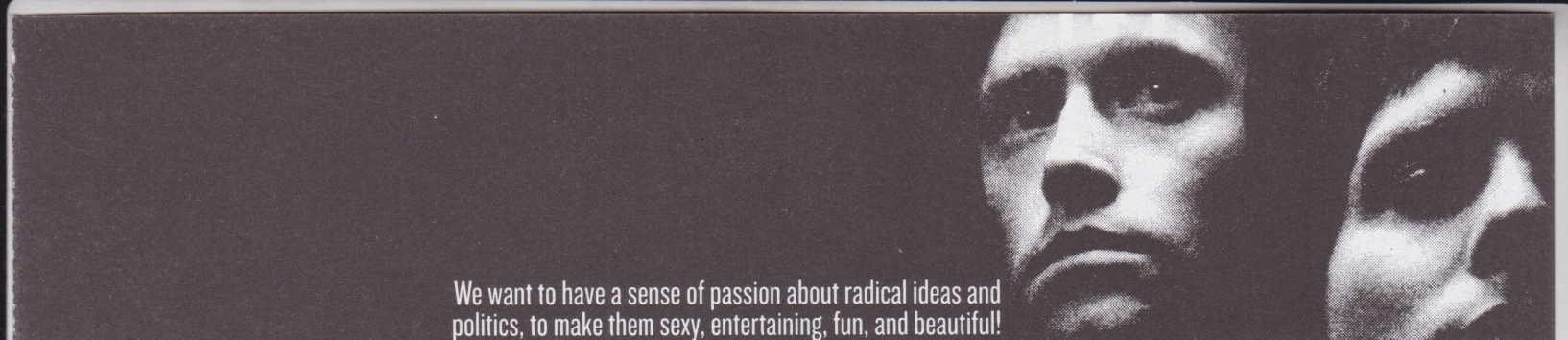
can just hang out with us. Especially when we play out of the punk scene—you know, at a punk show, the band just walks up out of the crowd onto the stage and plays, and it's a given that they're one of us—but when we play for pop kids, or at bigger festivals, it's different. But I think we can show by example. We can show that bands are real people you can hang out with.

Lars: Or the reverse autograph thing that we do from time to time. Kids will come up to us and ask for our autograph, and we say: "Well, only if you give me your autograph back." Kids are pretty surprised by that—it's not part of their illusion about what a rock star should be like.

Dennis: It's such a weird feeling when people come up to you and really want your autograph. It has a lot to do with communication, and finding ways to communicate. A lot of people don't know how to approach you, or don't feel like they have anything smart to say, so they can start by asking for your autograph. And it's hard—I don't want to come off like an ass by saying "No, I won't sign an autograph, it's not punk rock to do that"—it can be hard to explain to people that we're not into that.

I think that exclusive "coolness" can be intensified when you start talking about radical politics. It's not just that you're wearing suits, you're in the band, and you're up on stage, but now you're talking about a perspective on politics that the audience may not relate to, or understand.

Dennis: It is hard. It's hard. One thing I love is when bands leave traces. When they say stuff on stage that piques people's interest, and they go look into that later. On stage, we're a lot more direct than the theory and rhetoric we use in our album.



We want to have a sense of passion about radical ideas and politics, to make them sexy, entertaining, fun, and beautiful!

Lars: It wouldn't be a show otherwise—it would be too boring, just reciting that rhetoric.

Dennis: We try to be very direct on stage. But at the same time, when a band says something, and two kids in the crowd suddenly get the reference—I just love that! You know, we stuff our album booklets with those kinds of nods to our favorite theorists. If you read a lot of political theory, you'd pick up on a lot of those references. It's full of those kinds of traces. But we also want it to be a starting point for people to get into these ideas. ¶ In Sweden, for years the working class tradition emphasized great educational programs. We all grew up in families that were not educated families. None of us has parents that went to school past about age 13, when they started working. So we're all on this trip of self-education. We want that for other people as well. One thing we totally missed on the album was to have a list so people could do their own reading, and their own research. We finished the record, and then it hit us—"Holy shit! We forgot to leave a list."

Yeah, I think without that it is pretty tough to penetrate. I consider myself to be familiar with these political ideas, but it's still hard for me to identify the source of a lot of the material in your liner notes.

Dennis: Tons of people come up and ask what we're reading these days or ask for a recommendation. One of the things we tell them is to just go to the bookstore, check out the political books there, and just start! That's what we had to do. When I first got into this stuff, I had no idea. I found a Noam Chomsky book nine years ago because he was on a split 7-inch with Bad Religion, and I wanted to know who this guy was. I started reading his books and it blew my mind! The other thing we do is we have

a booklist that we'll email to people who ask. It ranges from starting points, to really heavy shit, to funny stuff we've enjoyed.

Lars: We're also involved in something called the Black Mask Collective, which puts out bulletins that give that kind of info too, with really extensive footnotes, as well as material like in our album. We'll pass that out at shows sometimes.

Dennis: We like to leave those kinds of traces so people can use them to educate themselves. I think it feels a whole lot better to learn it yourself than to just be told, "Here's everything you need to know."

Lars: It's a matter of limited space of what we can fit—we can't fit an entire analysis of capitalism in a CD booklet—so we have to leave traces.

It's really refreshing to see a band emphasize questions and critiques, over simple answers and slogans.

Lars: We don't see ourselves as having answers—we just see ourselves as having an analysis. A lot of bands will write deliberately vague lyrics so people can make their own interpretation, which is insane. We write lyrics that mean something very clear to us. This is our analysis, and we won't be shy about presenting it. But we're making clear that this is our contemporary analysis, but it might change.

Dennis: We're kind of fed up with the whole "Fuck the cops" kind of thing . . . Write more songs about that if you want to, but it's not where we are in our lives. We want to challenge people. The leftist scene for a long time has made it ugly to be intellectual. If you're too well read, you don't fit in. But we want people to be educated, or intellectual. A lot of times punk bands give too easy answers to very complex questions. It doesn't cut it.

Lars: We're so sick of bands being anti-intellectual. Anytime a band says that, it makes me so mad: "No, we're not smart." It's like kicking yourself in the nuts.

Dennis: Yeah, for so long the punk scene has been very good at degrading itself by saying "We're punk kids, why should we learn about Michel Foucault? Why do we have to care?" That's pretty retarded.

It's the second part of a one-two punch, following up the state, the media and the schools telling us to stay away from these radical thinkers, and then the punk kids finishing it off by saying it's not cool to investigate these ideas. ¶ I want to talk to you a little bit about satire, which in this age of heightened irony can be dangerous. You say that "If alienation stifles and co-opts creative and productive energy for its own benefit, then satire and self-reliance and resistance redefine [those energies] in rejection of alienation." I think satire is a very powerful tool, but don't you think that it can be tricky? For one, we run the risk of never taking ourselves seriously. I think people have seen The (International) Noise Conspiracy as being really tongue-in-cheek about ideas that are actually really important to you.

Dennis: Yeah, that's a problem. Well, we're not very tongue-in-cheek. I think we try to be really passionate, and really honest. Sometimes things are so absurd, the world is so fucked up . . .

Lars: . . . that you wish you were in an alternate dimension, so you *could* just laugh at it.

It's funny—when you say that to me now, I definitely feel that passion and honesty, but when I listen to your record I'm not always so sure.

Dennis: I guess that's the risk of putting out a record. People see you from where they stand. ☺

This summer I tagged along with A New Kind of American Saint and No Comply on their tour of the East Coast. It was one of those punk rock tours where shows fell through and others came out of nowhere to take their place. One of those shows that came up at the last second was at the M&M Hall in Old Bridge, New Jersey. The show was amazing—with 200 kids, five bands, and a ton of distro tables and people passing out flyers and activist literature, it felt more like a fest than a regular show.

During the show I noticed a middle-aged woman watching the band from behind the stage. I assumed she was someone's mom or she worked at the hall, but at one point she came to the mike to bring attention to the graffiti in the bathroom. She told everyone that if they kept disrespecting the bathrooms, that "we" wouldn't have a place for shows next time. She spoke with a voice of concern like a peer, not authority like some dick hall employee. I didn't know what to make of her.

Later, someone mentioned that she had booked all the bands—I couldn't imagine why. After the show, I spoke with her. Her name was Sue Mecca and it turned out that not only did she book the bands, she paid all of them (including the bands I was with), bought pizza for everyone with her own money, and would clean up after everyone was gone. And this wasn't a one-night thing for her—Sue books shows at the M&M Hall on a regular basis! Sue, a 43-year-old mother of three, wife, home tutor, and counselor has been spending her free time—and quite a bit of her own money—setting up shows for the last three years for no reason other than because she loves punk rock.

I knew then that I had to do an interview with Sue Mecca: punk rock mom.

Interview by **Soliman Lawrence**



sue mecca

PUNK ROCK



How did you get into setting up punk and hardcore shows?

About three years ago, one of my son's friends wanted to book a show, but needed a "responsible adult" to be there. He asked me to help him out, and I agreed. Then another kid heard what I was doing, and we did a show together. Kids keep asking me to work with them, and it works out great for both of us.

What were your original preconceptions of punk kids and punk culture before doing your first show?

I hate to admit it, but I used to be a "typical" adult and thought that "different" kids were somehow inferior. I remember shopping with my sons, when they were small enough to ride in shopping carts—when we'd see kids who had funky clothes or hair, especially girls, I'd whisper to them "Don't even *think* about bringing home kids like that." Who would have thought that I'd be the one bringing home "different" kids now? [laughs] My opinions changed when I tutored a kid about five years ago. He had long hair—which was sometimes green—and tons of homemade piercings and tats. The first time I met him, I remember thinking that I hope my sons never ended up looking like that. But after getting to know him, I changed my mind. He was the kid that introduced me to hardcore, and got me to open my mind, to listen, to ask questions, and to stop judging people.

great conversations about everything from animal rights, to fights at shows, to dealing with being different in a carbon-copy world. We don't always agree, but we talk, and most importantly, they think. They don't follow the crowd, or follow the counter-culture—they think about issues and do what they think is right. From the time they were little, I taught them that right is right, even if you're the only one doing the right thing. They have taken that philosophy to heart, and stand up for the underdog and unpopular ideas, no matter what. They're all straightedge, although my middle son is the only one who wears Xs on his hands. He is very proud of and outspoken about his choice. Although my boys are all different in many ways, they are all kind, thoughtful, hard-working, ambitious, and funny kids. We share a bizarre sense of humor; if something is funny, we laugh. We may not be politically correct, but we don't wanna be either. We all pride ourselves on being individuals. I'm blessed—how many parents, especially of three boys, can rave about their kids? Or maybe parents don't appreciate their kids as much as they should.

What do you see punk rock doing for kids that mainstream society fails to do and what do you think it is that attracts them to it?

No matter how anti-social people are, I think they still have a need to fit in somewhere. I like being unique, and I hope I never become "normal," but there are times when I wanna be just another person and blend in. I think that kids feel

what they're thinking. This isn't popular because it makes other people think, and thinking and questioning makes you uncomfortable. Blindly following the crowd is so much easier. And most people can live that way. Punk kids can't. ¶ All throughout history, it's been the "different" people who've made an impact and changed the world. I read the autobiography of Frederick Douglass—that guy was so punk rock! He wouldn't stay a slave, because it wasn't right to be treated that way. His spirit wouldn't be broken. I see that same resilient spirit in punk kids. No matter how hard life gets, no matter how badly they're treated for their beliefs, music, dress, etc, they don't give in. So why does history consider Frederick Douglass a "must-read" and a hero, and punks a blight on society? I just don't get it.

How do you—and don't you—fit into mainstream society? What do other adults think about you?

The older I get, the less respect I have for people, especially adults. Kids have an excuse for doing dumb stuff: they're young. But what's an adult's excuse? They should know better. I hate when parents complain about their kids, then have the nerve to act like morons themselves! Adults have varying opinions about me. Some are suspicious of me, because I associate with kids. I've been accused of "inappropriate" conduct, although I don't do anything but support and help kids. Most parents just kinda shake their head and say things like, "I

Adults have varying opinions about me. Some are suspicious of me, because I associate with kids. I've been accused of "inappropriate" conduct, although I don't do anything but support and help kids.

Tell me about your kids now. Have they been affected by your interest in hardcore?

My kids *rule*! Besides being great kids, they're nice people. We've all influenced each other, and they're also into hardcore. They go to shows with me, which is awesome. We have a blast. My oldest son has been vegan for two years, and after watching him, I've become vegan. My two other boys are veggie. We have

that way too. Punk rock gives them a place to feel normal—one of the crowd—yet retain their individuality. People like us can't be mainstream. No matter how hard we try, it's just not us—and that's a good thing. Mainstream people are followers, sheep; they don't think for themselves. Most punk or hardcore kids don't fit in because they think for themselves and say

don't know how you stand the music." I'm a bit uncomfortable around adults; I have a paranoia that they're judging me—which they usually are—so I just try to avoid them. Interestingly though, once adults start talking to me, they're impressed. My student's parents think I'm a godsend, because I get their kids to succeed. And my line for my counseling practice is "A different kind of



therapist, for a different kind of kid." I'm getting more confidence in myself, and am trying to learn to not be so defensive about being different. Don't get me wrong though—I don't look real different. I dress casual preppy, but with my own quirks. My fingernails are usually 3 different colors (4 of one color, 3 of another, 3 of another), and I wear two different earrings. I just like how it looks—it fits me.

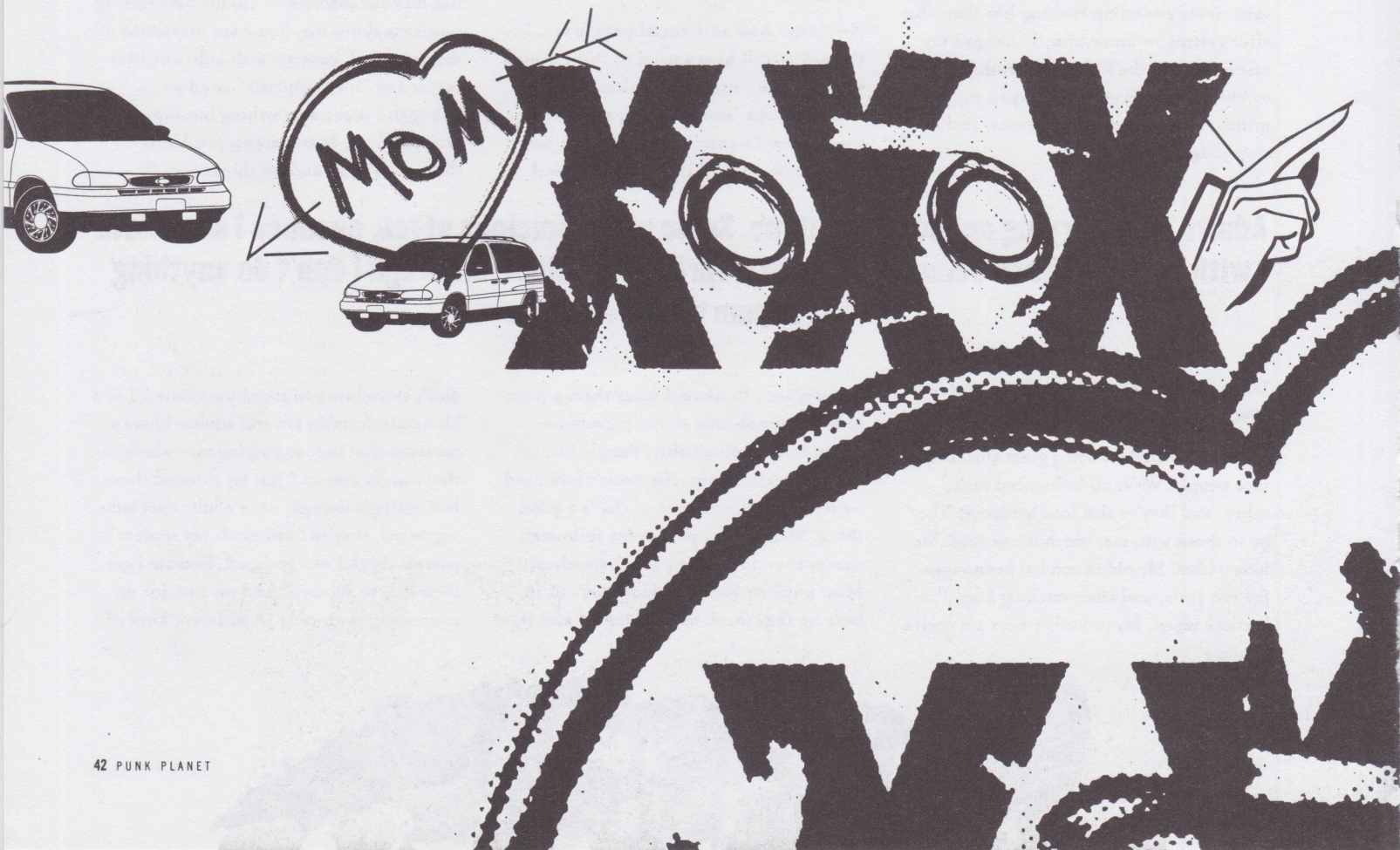
What changed you from being your average conservative adult, to someone who now can't stand adults, mainstream society, and all the baggage that comes with it?

A lot of it has to do with my health. I have a muscle disease called fibromyalgia. My muscles are always tight; they never relax. You can't tell by looking at me, but I'm always in pain. It affects every muscle, including my heart, and also affects my

internal organs. The worst part, however, is that it messes up my brain chemicals. I have a little bit of ADD, OCD, and every other initialed disorder, but I suffer the most from depression. I take medication for it, and am doing much better. I've been sick my whole life, but was only diagnosed five years ago. Before that, I was too sick to go out much. I also suffer from social anxiety disorder—I get paranoid in crowds. My meds also help with that, but I still tend to be a loner. So I was home alone a lot. That, in addition to being in constant pain, makes a person *cranky*, to put it mildly. Now that I take meds, and have had over a dozen surgeries, I am relatively healthy and much happier. I can go out into the world and participate, instead of sitting at home, bitching and judging people. ¶ I also have had a lot of influence from my parents. I live across the street from them, which is

usually good. However, they are very conservative, and I grew up inhibited and shallow-minded. Add that to my medical problems, and it's a wonder I'm normal at all! [laughs] My parents are very judgmental, although they're much better these days. I always thought that people lived like I did and thought like I did, or at least they *should*, because I thought I was right. ¶ Now, though, I realize that I know very little, and that people live completely different lives than I do. I've learned to appreciate the differences in people, instead of wanting everyone to be alike. After dealing with my health problems, and my son's health problems, I've learned that very few things in life are *that* important. I've learned to enjoy things instead of criticizing them. I think mohawks are cute, tough guys are sweet, and tats are awesome. I've learned first hand that rumors aren't usually true, so I don't

I assumed I'd be a typical suburban soccer mom, but it's just not me. You never know what life has to offer, where life will lead you or who you'll meet. Hardcore kids have reminded me to grab every possible moment, make the most of every day, and enjoy life.



believe what I hear about people. And I try to listen and care.

You've talked very broadly about the failure of mainstream society, but what do you see as solutions to this "cookie cutter" culture? What do you think people can do on an individual, as well as a group level to actively create change?

Individuals are the key to opening people's minds. We have to keep trying, no matter how hard it gets. You never know when you've made a difference and sparked some thought in another person. But talking the talk isn't enough. You need to live your convictions, practice what you preach and be the person you'd like to be. You may not change people's minds right away, but if they see you consistently doing the right thing, they'll start paying more attention. ¶ Punks are a wonderful example of this. They may be judged at first by their looks, but once people see what they're really like inside, they'll have to rethink their original opinions. No one is one-dimensional; I love how the kids who look the most outrageous can turn out to be the sweetest, most dedicated kids—just like the nicest looking kid can turn out to be a jerk. ¶ Here's a great example of how it can work: at one of my earlier shows, the cops showed up. They saw a lot of kids sitting in the parking lot, and kept nodding toward a girl with pink hair, intimating that there must be some trouble. I assured them that everything was fine; they were skeptical, to say the least. They left, but showed up again later, sure that there must be some trouble by now. Of

course there wasn't, and the looks on their faces as they stood in the doorway, watching kids having a great time listening to music, made me proud. The cops still come to my shows, but just to say hello. They know that nothing but harmless fun is going on. Kids always ask me why the cops show up and when I tell them, they are impressed. They talk to the cops now too, and everyone gets along. Recently, someone called the cops, reporting that there were "400 kids doing drugs roaming the streets." The cops came to the show, told me about the report, and said, "But we know everything is cool here." They've even started asking questions about the music, and one cop is an '80s metal-head! [laughs] This is what doing shows is all about; this is what keeps me going when I'm exhausted and thinking about giving up.

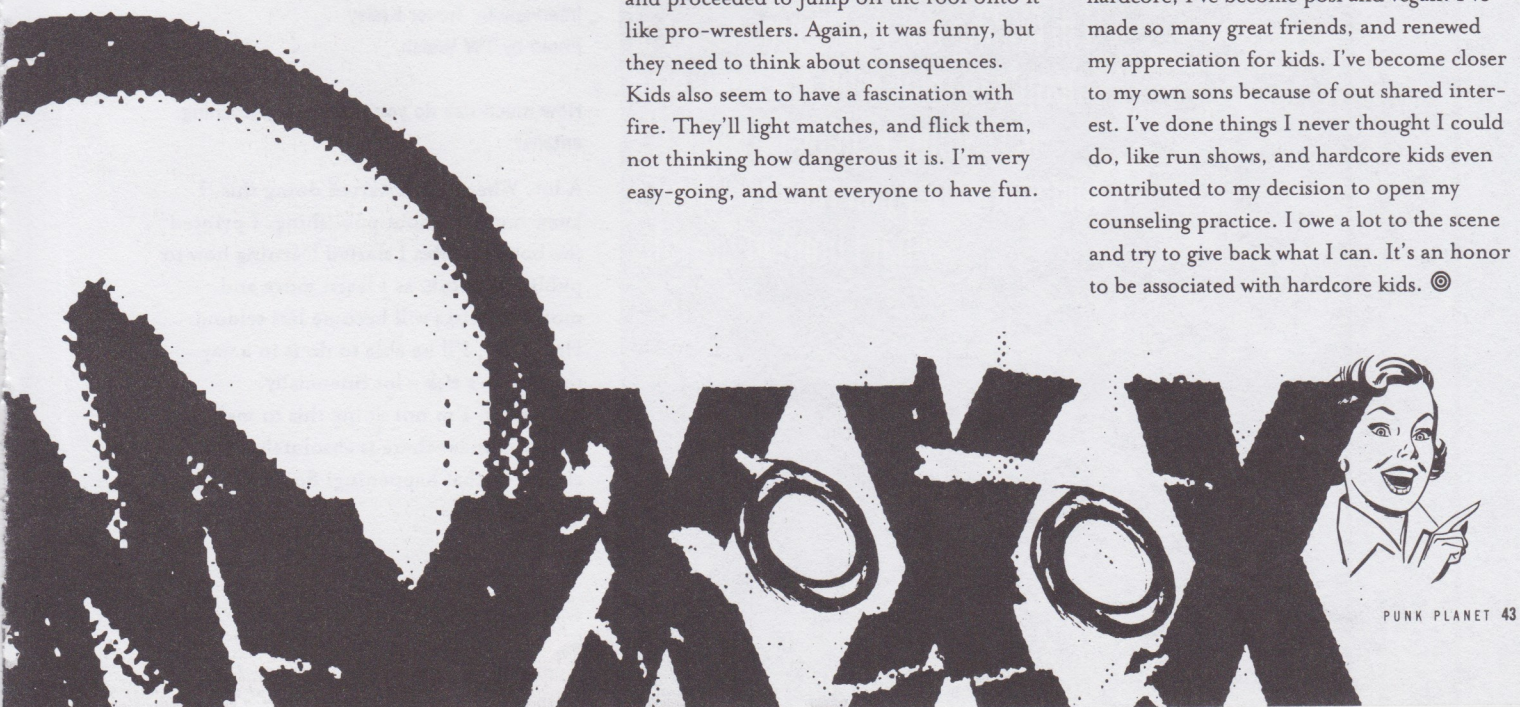
What was it like when you first started booking shows?

When I first started, I booked and ran the entire show. Then, some kids wanted to do shows there. Since I'm the only one allowed to book the hall, I became the hall hook-up: I booked the hall and the kids did the rest. It was working great: I didn't have to worry about losing money and kids got to book all different kinds of shows, while learning about responsibility. Unfortunately, some kids have been doing dumb stuff at the shows lately. They brought whipped cream to one show and sprayed it all over. I'm sure it was fun while they did it, but it made a lot more clean-up, and the floor was very slippery. At the next show, kids set up a board on 2 chairs, and proceeded to jump off the roof onto it like pro-wrestlers. Again, it was funny, but they need to think about consequences. Kids also seem to have a fascination with fire. They'll light matches, and flick them, not thinking how dangerous it is. I'm very easy-going, and want everyone to have fun.

But I won't tolerate this type of crap. And it's the pop-punk kids who are doing it, maybe because they're young. The "tough guys" give me very little problem. With them, I have to watch out for signs of fights, and they like to drink at shows—which I don't like—but they understand the concept of respect. I almost feel like I'm babysitting at some of these pop-punk shows, and sorry, but I can't do that week after week. I do have to say that once I've spoken to the kids about their behavior, they come through: they clean up and apologize. But I'm starting to get discouraged, which pisses me off, since I really like these kids. I really shocked them when, after the whipped cream incident, I came out from the back of the hall, stopped a band that was playing, took the mike, and told them that if they want to end the shows at the hall, they should continue doing dumb stuff. [laughs] Again, they handled it well and came up to me and apologized, but the fact that I had to do that annoyed me. Maybe that's when they learn the most; I'm just tired of always having to be the teacher.

Looking back, could you ever have predicted that you would have ended up doing this?

I never thought that I'd be involved in hardcore/punk at this age. I assumed I'd be a typical suburban soccer mom, but it's just not me. You never know what life has to offer, where life will lead you or who you'll meet. Hardcore kids have reminded me to grab every possible moment, make the most of every day, and enjoy life. I may be 43, but I feel 16. Attitude is everything. Because of hardcore, I've become posi and vegan. I've made so many great friends, and renewed my appreciation for kids. I've become closer to my own sons because of our shared interest. I've done things I never thought I could do, like run shows, and hardcore kids even contributed to my decision to open my counseling practice. I owe a lot to the scene and try to give back what I can. It's an honor to be associated with hardcore kids. ☺



It's an early Sunday afternoon in Seattle and Adam Voith is still lying in bed. You can't blame the guy. Last night was like most nights: he was up until 3 a.m. returning e-mail, filling orders or tinkering with some unfinished writing. Adam Voith spends the majority of his evenings this way. While such a work ethic seems commonplace at most indie labels, few seem as challenging as his identity-bending publishing company, TNI Books. Not that Voith's complaining. Actually, he kind of likes it.

Nearly everything that surrounds TNI is a challenge. Established a few years back, after Voith headed West from the University of Indiana, the project served as a launching pad for a novel he had written in 1999 called *Bridges With Spirit*. Upon realizing that no one in their right mind would publish a sentimental look-back at his cross-country tales of refrigerator-magnet poetry and five-dollar punk shows, Voith decided to print the book himself. Voith hoped he'd reach an audience like the book's characters—music-obsessed nomads, who believed in doing something just for the hell of it. Whether or not he's found that audience is still being decided. Nevertheless, Adam has continued his adamant search for such a community—passionately hoping that they will embrace other risks. Risks like the collection of found recordings he recently pressed by folk singer Damien Jurado and the first issue of *Little Engines*, his magazine dedicated to fiction that is slated to be released this Spring. When we spoke, Voith had just come off of a five-week tour with Pedro The Lion, and he seemed overwhelmingly optimistic about TNI's current state.

Interview by Trevor Kelley

Photo by TW Walsh

How much risk do you think self-publishing entails?

A lot. When I first started doing this, I knew nothing about publishing. I printed the book and then I started learning how to publish. I think, as I learn more and more, the risks will become less seldom. Hopefully, I'll be able to do it in a way that doesn't risk a lot financially. Obviously, I'm not doing this to make a ton of money—there is absolutely no chance of that happening! So, at this

I'm finding out that there is a lot of people in punk who are interested in reading, especially when it's something they can relate to. That's what I hope to provide.

point, a ton of the risks are monetary. As I do more and more projects, I hope I'll learn to do things more efficiently. I hope to learn how to get back what you put in. I hope to learn how to break even. [laughs]

Well, the most evident problem I see is that there are very few people to pull your cues from.

From what I've learned, hardly anyone can make it as an independent author. As for self-published independent authors? Forget about it. No one cares at all. Because of that, I've gained a huge respect for people who do zines. I've learned to love the process of sending out 10 copies of a book to one distro or 15 copies to some random dude, just like zines do. I also really love selling books at shows. Even though that can lead to super-small distribution, for me, that's what this is all about. It's *really* rewarding. By doing things this way, you know that it is getting to the type of crowd who can relate and the type of crowd who can understand how hard it is to do what I'm doing. It's never going to be about big numbers. For a while, I think it'll stay within the area I know the best, which is the independent rock market.

Are you convinced that indie rock audiences are really that interested in publishing?

Well, like I said, I'm not looking to be some big seller, but so far I've been convinced that they are. Lately, I have had a lot of people submitting work who found out about TNI through this scene. There's a lot of people checking out the website. Things have really been picking up. I think I underestimated my audience. I'm finding out that there is a lot of people in punk who are interested in reading, especially when it's something they can relate to. That's what I hope to provide.

I agree, but at the same time, I feel that for this audience, things are only accepted when there's a punk-based qualifier. I think a lot of people may have only read the book because you were the guy selling the books at the Pedro The Lion shows, along with the Pedro The Lion T-shirts. I don't think it's just blind faith. Which is shame.

Definitely. When Dave [Bazan, of Pedro The Lion] asked me to tour with him as

their merchandise guy, we were both aware that people would be buying the book because it was affiliated with his band. But there were a lot of people who would buy the book and wouldn't buy any music. To me, that was the payoff. It proved to me that there were people who were interested in something like this. Also, there were times when we would get to a club early and I would be setting up merchandise and some of the locals would be hanging around, looking at the book. I remember this one instance in particular, when this middle-aged golfer guy bought a copy in Florida. Those type of things got me feeling like I wasn't just riding the coattails of a really great band. [laughs]

Do you ever feel like you are looking for a reaction from outside of this community?

Not really. The plan has always been to start on a smaller scale and see what happens. I started out not really knowing how to do this. Maybe down the road, that'll become relevant. Who knows? I've been working on a new book that I think will be more universal in who will enjoy it. But when I wrote *Bridges With Spirit*, the only audience I had in mind were my friends. I've been quite realistic about what it is. For me, it's a first book: nothing more, nothing less. The audience for this book is really small—not small in numbers, but small in scope. And really, this is where this story is best applied.

Do you hope to pull outsiders in? Obviously what you're doing doesn't apply strictly to punk enthusiasts. I think just about anyone can benefit from your mode of thinking.

Like I said, that may be coming. I think that the Damien Jurado release did that in many ways. It doesn't address music in any shape or form. In fact, it kind of slaps people in the face who bought it expecting music, because there isn't any music on it at all! It has nothing to do with that and, surprisingly, I think that it has found an audience outside of the rock community. NPR just did a story on it, which is crazy, and from what I've noticed, there has been a lot of people who bought it that don't know who Damien is or what Sub Pop is or anything related to this scene. To me that's just so rewarding. ¶ I don't

want to be a gimmick, though.

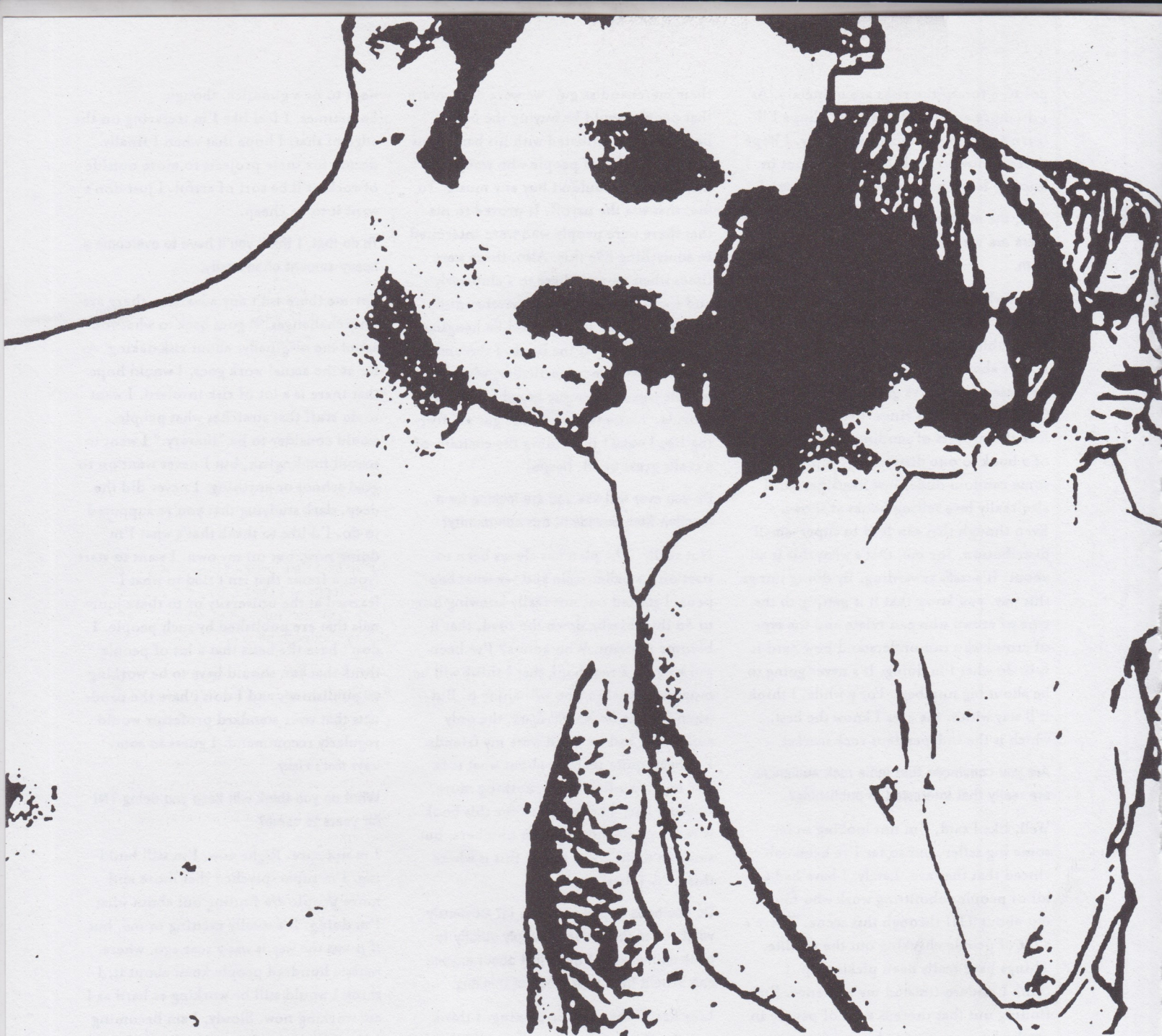
Sometimes, I feel like I'm teetering on the edge of that. I hope that when I finally decide for these projects to move outside of rock, it'll be sort of artful. I just don't want it to be cheap.

To do that, I think you'll have to overcome a heavy amount of adversity.

For me there isn't any adversity, there are only challenges. It goes back to what you asked me originally, about risk-taking. As far as the actual work goes, I would hope that there is a lot of risk involved. I want to do stuff that stretches what people would consider to be "literary." I went to school for English, but I never went on to grad school or anything. I never did the deep, dark studying that you're supposed to do. I'd like to think that's what I'm doing now, but on my own. I want to start from a frame that isn't tied to what I learned at the university or to these journals that are published by such people. I don't have the basis that a lot of people think that you should have to be working in publishing, and I don't have the products that your standard professor would regularly recommend. I guess in some ways that's risky.

What do you think will keep you doing TNI for years to come?

I'm not sure. Right now, I'm still building. I'm super-psyched that more and more people are finding out about what I'm doing. It's totally exciting to me, but if it was the way it was a year ago, where *maybe* a hundred people knew about it, I think I would still be working as hard as I am working now. Slowly, I am becoming more and more obsessed with it. I find myself not going out socially at all. I'm ending up at my computer for all hours of the day. These are bad things, mind you! [laughs] I've been asking myself why I'm doing this for a while now. I look at the debt I am in because of this and wonder how I would be living if I didn't have TNI. I continuously ask myself, "What the hell are you doing?" And all I know is that *this* is what I'm doing. This is what makes me feel like I have something to offer. ☺



You either love The Locust or you hate them—there is no middle ground. When I included a debate about the band in my zine, *Hit It or Quit It*, a few months back, I was unprepared for the deluge of e-mails I received. Readers sent in byte after byte of Locusty response: gossipy backstage So Cal tell-alls, belligerent ropy vomit, Locust as the “anti-emo,” heavy manifesto-style diatribes on the band’s look, endorsements of their “musical vision,” and critiques of their public image. There were so many perspectives—most of them contradictory—on the same group, I was

baffled. Why did so many people have so much to say about a hardcore band that only plays 45-second songs?

I decided that it was time to tap the source, to see if answers could be drawn out of the band. But what questions to ask? Fashion versus function? Hardcore versus metal? Entertainment versus spectacle? Playin’ stupid or just plain stupid? The list of questions seemed as limitless as the debate around the band. Join me in a journey to the bottom of The Locust.

Interview by **Jessica Hopper** with **JR Nelson**

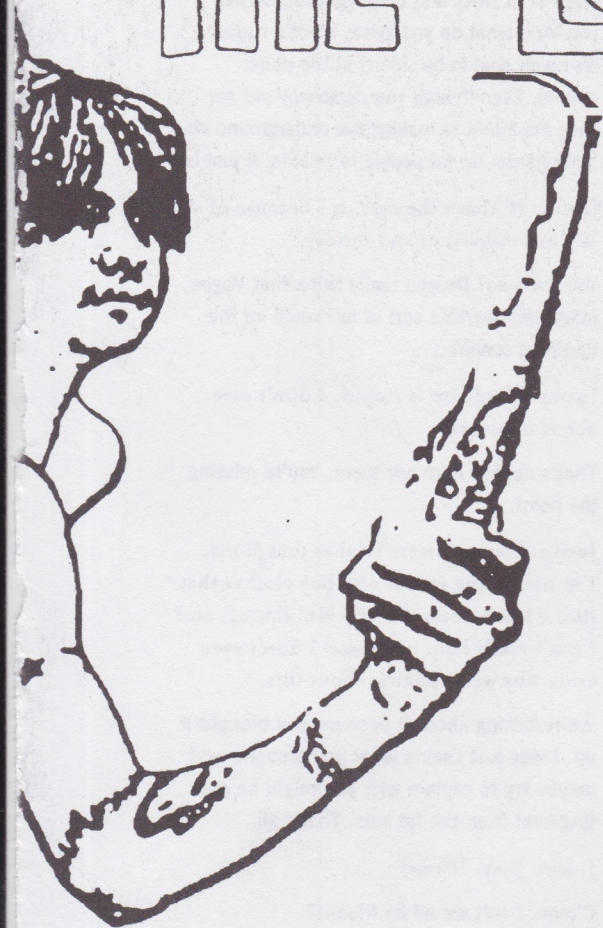
One thing that I find I really appreciate in a band is honesty, which is something I think you have. I get the feeling The Locust comes from an honest place—but the town you’re in, San Diego, seems like the last place to look for honesty. Why do you guys defy the norm?

Justin: I am from Chicago, actually. I think San Diego could use some help, but lately, things have been cool. There have been shows in the sewer under the freeways.

Joey: There is no lack of creativity in San Diego, at least as far as the kids are con-



THE LOCUST



cerned. But there are very few good bands in general, so the fact that there is so much good stuff going on here is a feat in itself.

Do you feel surprised when you see or hear a good band?

Joey: Yeah. I know there are good bands out there that have something I can connect to, but it's a matter of finding them.

Do you feel like it's because there is a larger gamut of crappy bands to choose from or just where you're at?

Joey: Bands get together for two months, create an influx of shit, and immediately make records. That's a bad idea.

What is it about San Diego that fostered the start of The Locust? Was it a reaction to the town, or inspiration from it.

Justin: I think it was more just where our lives intersected, from the high schools we went to, to the food we ate, or the fact that this is a military town.

When was the first time you realized you were different from other people?

Joey: I went to Catholic school, and early on, I took issue with a lot of it. At every one I went to, kids were getting molested. I thought everyone around me was nuts.

Justin: I grew up in Phoenix which is so white trash and trailer park. I was trying to steer away from that. If I didn't move out of there, I would be all sort of things that I didn't want to be. I am glad I got out a backwards situation, where I was getting my ass kicked for really just being who I am.

When we talked to you before, you mentioned that you really hate The Locust being regarded as a metal band.

Justin: Like Slipknot? [laughs] I think of metal lyrics being about banging your head and sacrificing Christians. Sure, we target Christians, but we aren't talking about rotting bodies and shit.

Would you say that your lyrics are reactionary? Is there something you are reacting to?

Joey: Sometimes. I guess we are in some sense, lyrically. We are reacting to the bullshit that constantly surrounds us.

Do you consider yourselves a political band?

Joey: I have convictions about certain things, but saying "I'm political" is a little misleading. We all sort of have deep rooted convictions that influence the band but we aren't restrained by them.

Justin: We aren't a band like Man Lifting Banner or something, where we have a platform and ideologies and see ourselves as a communist group. I do think our music has political undertones though—we're just not as blatant as an anarcho-crust band.

You've said that being in this band was to be a "challenge to things." Why did you join a band to do that rather than doing something else to challenge people?

Joey: One: because I love music. Two: I do things outside of music anyway.

Like what?

Justin: Some of us are in school—Joey is a powerhouse when it comes to schooling.

What do you see yourselves doing after The Locust?

Joey: It's funny you ask that because I've never been as inspired or motivated to be in The Locust as I am now.

Justin: We've never been as gung-ho as we are now, with the new line up. We practice three times a week and things feel really fresh.

Do you have long terms goals for The Locust?

Justin: There are some major labels that are interested in us. I have no idea how they would market us though. For one, we couldn't be on MTV because a video for our songs would be 45 seconds long. Also, I'm not sure if the general population can grasp what we're going for.

But you're quite popular in the underground. Regardless of how short your songs are, you're still accessible enough to sell 20,000 copies of a record.

Justin: That baffles me.

Joey: It's flattering, but I'm cool with it.
[laughs]

It baffles you that people latch onto something as inaccessible as The Locust?

Justin: If that's how you want to phrase it, yeah, sure. I can't explain it.

I don't think it would be that hard to market you to a mass audience. That's what major labels do best. You just need a hook—look at Slipknot: 10 retards dressed up in masks jumping around playing bad metal.

Justin: Yeah, but musically, there are quite a few bands out on the market already like that.

I think that the success of groups like that has everything to do with niche marketing, which focuses on making the consumer feel unique. A band like Nashville Pussy has made a career out of the two second pitch of tits, breathing fire and swearing. I'm not saying that The Locust is as base-level as that, but a major could easily reduce you to "kids with crazy haircuts that fight the audience." Just with that, you'd have more of a story that 85 percent of the bands in America.

Justin: I don't know about that.

Joey: I couldn't see that.

But you do sell quite a few records, and a fair amount is from word of mouth. Something must strike enough curiosity that someone wants to plunk down \$10.

Joey: It's all kids who just want to collect all the different colors of vinyl, that's all.

I don't think you're giving yourself enough credit. I mean look at the amount of Locust stuff for sale on Ebay.

Justin: It's ridiculous. An ad for our stuff on Ebay will say "RARE 5-inch picture disc"—but we pressed 6,000 of them and I still have a few hundred in our label office on a shelf, selling for normal prices! People will make money off whatever they can. I can't stop someone from spending their money, but there are people paying \$52 for a belt buckle that we readily sell for \$8.

But I think that speaks volumes about the fact that people connect with you and understand what you're doing. Does that feel weird?

Joey: Justin, do we even understand what we're doing? [laughs] People have their opinions, but I could give a fuck.

Justin: I don't care if they do understand. I am all for bad publicity and people believing whatever they want about us. Everyone has something to say about us.

So you're OK with keeping people in the dark?

Joey: What are we keeping from people? Things will always be interpreted subjectively, even if we specifically define things...

I'm not suggesting you issue a manifesto.

Joey: I don't even have time to correct the rumors! Criticism or praise, it doesn't affect how we operate individually or as a unit.

Justin: I don't have problems with our band being viewed in a negative context. Fuck happy la la land.

It's really interesting to me how every conversation about The Locust is polarized. People either are totally pro, or totally negative—a friend of ours who thinks The Locust now make it impossible for fat people to succeed in hardcore.

Justin: That's stupid. We don't make it impossible for anyone to succeed.

I think they are more implying that since you are popular, you have influenced a genre-wide aesthetic of slimness...

Justin: I don't...

Hold on there. Bands, when they get popular, can turn the tide of scene aesthetics. Whether it's the Make Up or Nation of Ulysses bringing back mod suits and uniforms, or it's the Promise Ring and record covers, people follow what their favorite bands do. This being punk rock, you'd think there'd be less idolatry going on, but face it: by nature of The Locust being popular you are responsible for spawning trends, be they musical or aesthetic. So here you are, selling lots of records, being skinny, having big hair, wearing the tightest clothes ever made...

Justin: But if you saw some of us with our clothes off...

That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about a lot of kids seeing you up on stage or in zines and they want to look like you. And what do you know, all of a sudden it's super cool to be skinny in the underground. Even though you *personally did not have the intent* of making the underground climate harder for fat people to exist in, it just is.

Justin: If that's the case, it's because of fashion magazines and models.

You think so? Do you really think that *Vogue* magazine has that sort of influence on the hardcore scene?

Justin: Hardcore is stupid. I don't care about hardcore.

That's neither here nor there. You're missing the point.

Justin: Listen, I wear clothes that fit me. I'm not gonna go out and buy clothes that fit me like a dress. I am fuckin' skinny, and I can't really help it. [silence] I don't even know why we're talking about this.

We're talking about it because you brought it up. I was just seeing what you thought, and maybe try to explain why you might be getting heat from the fat kids. That's all.

Justin, Joey: [silence]

C'mon. Can't we all be friends?

Justin: No. I dunno.

OK. Do you want to be friends with some people?

Joey: Yeah.

Justin: Of course.

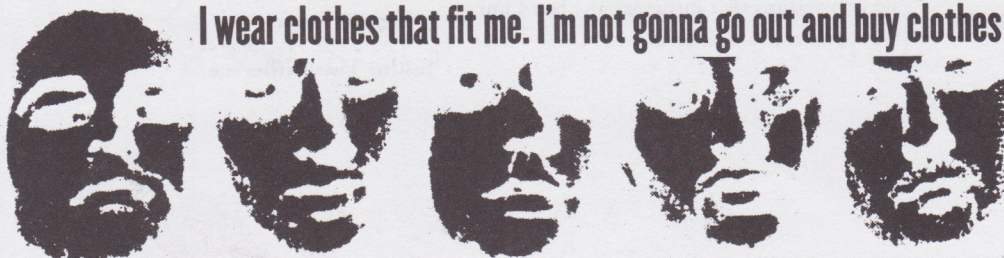
Do you *have* friends?

Justin: [laughs] Some.

Then let's be friends for one last question. Earlier you said that there are too many bad bands right now in independent music. I tend to agree with that. So how do we weed them out?

Joey: Nerve gas, but I have no idea how to get it. ☹

I wear clothes that fit me. I'm not gonna go out and buy clothes that fit me like a dress.



the underground speaks for itself:

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Kathleen Hanna
Noam Chomsky
Sleater-Kinney
Thurston Moore
Jello Biafra
Frank Kozik
Ian MacKaye
Steve Albini
Ruckus Society
Winston Smith
Porcell
Jody Bleyle
Mordam Records
Los Crudos
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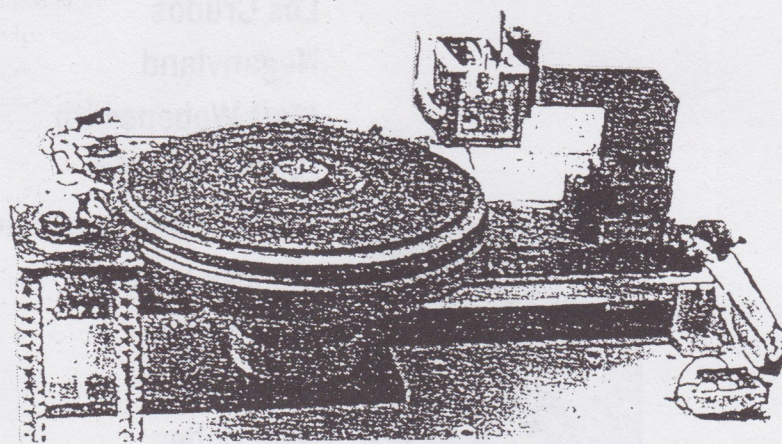


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INSPIRED ME TO PLAY MUSIC WITH
THE CREATION OF RECORDS ITS
RATHER THAN THE DESIRE OF
PLAYING IN A BAND. WHILE IN

GRADUALLY
PROFESSIONAL
RATHER THAN
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PROGRAMMING AND COMMERCIALS. I SPENT MOST OF MY TIME
IN THOSE DAYS MAKING RECORDS
FOR KIDS AT SCHOOL... THE LABEL
WAS FOUNDED WITH A HOUSE

Greg Sage and The Wipers are nothing short of a legend in their own time. This one man and his self-described "recording project" ushered the Pacific Northwest into the punk era in 1979 with angry chords and homemade records. They defined the sound of the Northwest a decade before the kids who moshed in the pits at their shows started up their own bands and became household names, the most famous, of course, being Nirvana. 20 years ago, The Wipers were living the DIY ethic, and they still are. Their eleventh record, *The Power of One*, has the same deep, rich, thick guitar sound that earned guitarist Greg Sage the title of "godfather of grunge."

In the years since he started playing punk rock, Greg Sage has watched countless trends come and go. He witnessed the Pacific Northwest come into regional vogue and fade out of it again, and has run the gauntlet of challenges that faced independent bands and independent labels since The Wipers started issuing their own records on their own label, Trap Records, back in 1980. And, after moving to Arizona, for the last several years the band has again started to run its own label, Zeno Records. In the intervening years, The Wipers put out records in collaboration with many independent labels including Enigma, Sub Pop Tim/Kerr, and various different European indies, some authorized, some not. Needless to say they've learned a hell of a lot about the recording industry over the years.

Greg Sage first started recording music off the radio onto vinyl when he was in grade school. He quit his studies after his first year of high school, and continued teaching himself about recording technology. Sage now runs Zeno's state-of-the-art studio featuring an analog recording system that he built himself. Sage previously ran his own studio in Portland before moving to Arizona in 1989.

When we talked on a hot day in August, Sage described how his commitment to staying independent has unfolded over the years in the work of the recording project called The Wipers.

Interview by Megan Shaw

You've produced some seminal records. Can you tell me about them? For example, you produced the first Beat Happenings album.

Yes, I produced a few things a long time ago. But I never was considered a producer, at least in my own eyes. Rather, I helped people out on recording. I never went after that area of expertise like a few other people have. In '93 and '94 I was getting letters from really large bands that wanted me to produce them. I shied away because I felt that where my expertise was, and where my interest lay, was to work with young bands because they needed the experience that I had, and would benefit from it more. It didn't make sense to produce really well known bands that had well-perceived records. I felt like I would just be pushing buttons for them.

I suspect that all had to do with being pulled into the limelight by bands like Nirvana and Hole, who frequently credited you as their inspiration.

Kurt wanted me to produce for him. He had such an amazing sound on his own, I would have loved to engineer for him. But I can't see putting the name of producer to an artist like that who already accomplishes his own unique sound. I can see that when an artist is new and fresh, and has ideas but doesn't know how to put them together, a producer would be helpful. But when you have an artist that is talented and has no problem expressing their ideas, then the most important role to me would be to hear what the artist is doing and capture it in technical terms.

When did you move to Arizona?

Late in 1989.

And then you started Zeno Records?

Yes. I took three or four years to find the place that we're in now. There was a long, long wait. I had all this equipment in storage and no place to set it up. I was looking for the right facility to build into a studio. And at that time tons of independent labels were begging me to set things up, so that I could do work for them. Then in late '92 we found our current facility in central Phoenix, an old piece of property about three quarters of an acre that had two buildings and three houses on it. It was ideal—a natural, communal set-up. There would be places for artists from elsewhere to stay right on the grounds. But by the time we were able to purchase the place and then make one of the buildings into the studio, independent labels were starting to fade. Unfortunately, during that time I missed out on doing a phenomenal amount of work.

What kind of recording work were you doing in Portland in the '80s in the years when you had your studio there?

Anything I could get, because normally the way it's worked since 1980 with our recordings is that I would work and save up a lot of money, rent equipment, make a record, and then license it to a label. We never took money from a record company. I would complete the record before anyone heard it. Once it was completely finished, including the artwork, I would shop it around to independent labels and license it. Back in those days our stuff sold fairly well. But then when we wouldn't get paid for it at all, I'd be out \$5,000 or \$6,000 dollars. In order to release an album, I'd have to go through that whole scenario all over again.

Sometimes there were lags between records of as much as three to four years, because I would have to go raise the money again. ¶ To this day, we haven't ever been paid by any of the labels that we've been on, and we've been on quite a few. So to be independent, truly independent, it still would cost a lot of money for me to make a recording. Not owning all our own equipment during the '80s, it was pretty expensive, which is why we built the studio that we have now.

Which ones?

Over the Edge, *Straight Ahead*, and *Follow Blind*, also *Land of the Lost*, were all extremely popular in Europe. But in all that time, we never received a single local review for any of the work we did. The bands that they would always rave about were the bands that were popular, but never really did anything, even though we were touring all the time and doing very well in Europe and other places in the United States.

up moving to New York for a year-and-a-half to distribute our record label in 1980 and '81. Towards the end of that we did really well over there because they thought we were a New York label. After we became quite successful, I would say to distributors, "I don't know if you remember this, but a long time ago you laughed and hung up on us when we told you where we were from." And it was kind of amusing to see the looks on people's faces. ¶ But people's attitudes change. Once it became possible to live anywhere and still be able to produce, we

People got very uptight that we left town. But I thought that was kind of funny because all the time we were there, we kind of made Portland, and made the Northwest.

Back in Portland in the '70s, what was the scene like? Was there a sense of a Portland punk community?

In 1979, it was very tight-knit, almost to the point of being a prejudice, more than a community. When I was first involved with it in '79, if you didn't dress the way every one else did, you weren't cool. It was chains and black leather coats.

What about musically?

That's where we kind of broke out. There were people that were the front voices. But not bands that anyone would recognize. In '80 and '81 bands like Poison Idea, The Rats—who turned into Dead Moon—the Dharma Bums, and Napalm Beach started playing.

A lot of the bands that you named were extremely popular in places other than the Northwest, much more so than at home. What was it like to be an Oregon band in Portland when you were much more famous in Europe?

We were by far much more famous in Europe than in Oregon. Up to the time I left Oregon in '89, we had recorded and released seven or eight full albums out of Portland. Some of them became number one LPs in Europe.

So you didn't get a lot of community support at home?

Well, there was community support in the sense that we were really popular in Portland. But we never got reviewed. It depended on what cocktail circuit you were in or what clique you were with. It was all somewhat prejudiced during those days. We had to move to New York to run our record label, because all the main distributors were in New York at the time, which also distributed records worldwide. We'd produced bands like the Neo Boys and Stiffnoids, so we had quite a few releases plus the two Wipers albums. We would talk to distributors and say, "We have this and this and this." And they would say, "Yes we've heard of this, we're interested in that, sure. Where's your label out of?" And I'd say, "Portland, Oregon," and they would laugh and hang up. ¶ The prejudice against other parts of the country back then made it really hard. It was a period of time when if you weren't from a big city, you just were overshadowed. This was before it became popular to be a band out of, like, Athens, Georgia. People would tell us, "You have to say that you're from LA or New York or London to get recognized." So we ended

went back to Portland and spent the next eight years there. It wasn't until '89 when I left Portland that we suddenly started getting local press. People got very uptight that we left town. But I thought that was kind of funny because all the time we were there, we kind of made Portland, and made the Northwest.

You put it on the map!

Yes, we definitely put it on the map. And that isn't even bragging, because we did so much work out of there. The first tour we did, in '86, in Europe, everywhere we went people would have Portland, Oregon circled on the map. It was like, to them, out of the wilderness was this one spot. It's unfortunate that Portland didn't take advantage of that back then in the '80s. None of our records ever got appreciated until about 10 years after the fact, in our own area.

Why did you leave Portland?

I was born and raised in Portland; it was a very powerful place to me. I had traveled a lot, but Portland was the only place I ever wanted to be. Then one day, that just changed. I don't know what it was. It was like a vortex change and everybody around me started changing along with it.

Sometimes I felt like I was one of the few people who were still anchored. Among a lot of creative people, I was one of the few people who wasn't becoming a heroin addict. A lot of creative people were going to the wayside. ¶ From '85 on, Portland had been a very strong community. A lot of the prejudice had disappeared and people were very supportive of each other. Then towards '88 it became very trendy to be competitive. Everything changes, you know, and a lot of those attitudes didn't feel productive. It didn't feel magical any more. I

bands that I was working with at the time that this was their home base. I said, "go to Seattle or Portland and you're just going to be one out of a million." I tried to talk them into rethinking how they were going to do things, and into releasing material out of their own home base. But a lot of people thought they would rather go to Seattle and get signed and become a star.

Did it work for any of them?

No. But then, Seattle and Portland are very different from here. So if you were

you're too poor to." And we'd hire lawyers and they'd tell us to blow it off because we were too poor. Justice is really expensive! ¶ That label ended up licensing the record to Sub Pop, but Sub Pop had enough respect for me to realize that there was a problem. They knew that the album was basically stolen from me. So they forced my former partner to enter into a new contract with me. The guy died over a year ago, and he took my record to the grave with him. He left it in the hands of his lawyers. So we still don't get paid. Sub Pop sends the roy-



just took off without any place in mind, and ended up in Arizona, where I didn't know anybody. I drove through here late at night on my way to California because I had a job offer as an engineer at a famous studio. I thought, well, I don't want to live in California, but may as well do it for a while. Phoenix felt like Portland. I pulled off the road in the middle of the night, and I've been here 10 years now.

What's it like like for you in Arizona, in terms of a punk community or a music community that you're part of?

Arizona is 180 degrees from Portland, at least the Portland I remember. There really isn't a strong music community, but I go back to Portland every six months or so and there isn't really one there, either. So that's hard to judge because I think there's no barometer for that, no way to measure it. When I first moved here in '89, there were a lot of talented people. But they all left and moved to Seattle or Portland because that was where all of the sudden there was a scene. When the grunge thing happened, everybody moved to Seattle or Portland. So this place became a vacuum really quickly. I tried to tell some of the

born and raised here, then 1991 through '93 would have been an exciting time to be up there because the Northwest became active again. But in a different way.

What was it like for you in the early '90s when the grunge thing happened in Seattle and so much attention was directed towards you? What were your relationships like with the Seattle labels that became interested in you?

Oh, that's a story. The record, *Is This Real*, was a partnership between me and a small Seattle label. It was one of the largest mistakes I ever made. I had my own label, Trap Records, which released the first two Wipers records. But I was convinced by some people that I wasn't a big enough label to handle what we were capable of. So I entered a partnership with someone who convinced me that they could do a much better job with distribution than I could. It was a 75/25 partnership, with me being a 75 percent owner in it. What happened is the guy took his 25 percent and moved to Seattle, and then never accounted to us. Then he went behind my back and licensed the record without our permission and never paid us for it. Basically, he stole our record. And he would even say to us with a smile on his face, "Go ahead and sue me,

alties to the lawyer, but the lawyer won't return our calls, and he won't send the royalties to us.

You haven't had the best experiences working with record companies.

There are a lot of shady people in this business. It was that way from the first record to the last label we worked with before we started putting our stuff out on Zeno. For the last two records that we did before the most recent, *The Power In One*, we never received any royalties. One label put out a tribute to us that sold really well. We were owed a lot of mechanical royalties off of that album, but we never received a cent. ¶ I'm not going to name names, but we licensed two records to that company. We wrote to them that they breached their contract, and asked them to return our stuff. The guy just old me over the phone, "You can send me all the notification you want, it means nothing to me." And this was someone I knew for many years as a friend! They still won't send us any product. It's a very shady business sometimes—it turns a lot of good people into thieves. I've seen a lot of people that I knew get involved with this business and turn into

power-controlling freaks. I try to stay away from all that as much as I possibly can, because to me it's just non-musical.

I saw that on your web page you wrote an article about the Echelon surveillance system, the system that the United States and allied governments use to eavesdrop on their citizens' private communications. In that article you mentioned a lack of politically critical media. I'm curious where you did your research on Echelon, and if you were planning on writing any more about it.

considered part of the punk "inner circle." But when we first played, I wore flannel shirts because that was the most un-cool thing a person could wear. Portland was always considered a logging town by a lot of outsiders, and so that was my silent political statement. A lot of kids understood that. We were really liked by almost everybody, instantly. It happened for us overnight, from the very first time we played. Nonetheless, the same people who controlled everything, who were the power structure inside the punk movement, were

as my direction when writing an album. I try to stay futuristic. I study people as barometers of possible futures to write about. But since 1995 or '96, it's been getting nearly impossible to get any vibes off of people, especially young people. It's like they're very un-opinionated compared to people in their age group five or 10 years before. ¶ So on our website, as an experiment, I wrote those stories about Echelon to see what people's reactions would be. I've been amazed that maybe one out of 100 finds those stories interesting, much less

Very few people seem to even grasp any more that there are ideas behind the records. I guess that era's over. But that's always been my energy, to protect myself and protect my destiny, and protect the people I care about. And that's the energy that I put into my music.

I don't have any real plans to do more of that kind of writing, because there really isn't much interest. When I started our website two years ago, we had a lot of people wanting to run an official Wipers website. We decided that we should just do it ourselves. I wanted to keep the focus somewhat away from the musical end of it, and focus more on the ideals behind The Wipers.

How would you describe those ideals?

People created the big problems and people can fix them. I'm not really intensely political about any one thing. I see my music more as *socially* political. It's not so much the power structure—it's the people who are in control of the power structure that are the center of the problem. You can see that in politics and you see the same thing in the music industry. There were people who had a stranglehold on us, people who were even friends. Power can corrupt people. Just like how, when I record or produce a band, people's egos can sometimes get in the way of something really magical. That's where my ideals have been, what my rebellion has always been against. ¶ For example, in the beginning, in the late '70s or early '80s, if you didn't dress a certain way, you weren't

against us because we weren't what they were. But without saying anything about it, just through the act of wearing flannel shirts, we opened up a lot of kids' eyes to the fact that they don't have to dress like penguins to be part of the punk community.

You were performing internal critique from the get-go.

I have always used tools like that to make points without preaching to people. I would never express my opinions in words as much as through actions or examples. I think that's the most powerful way of doing it. The flannel shirts are just one example, but it freed a lot of people over time, and broke down a lot of prejudices in people without me having to say a word. What I wanted to do on our website in the beginning was just an experiment. I wanted to see what our audience really thought. So I wrote a few stories regarding things that maybe 20 years ago, people would have been more aware of. I wanted to get a feeling of how people see their future. Every time I write a record, I spend a lot of time researching people, watching people, trying to get an idea of where their heads are at, or what their visions are. That's what I use

dangerous. 10 or 20 years ago, you would have heard a large outcry about that type of communications surveillance from punk music or other youth. It would have been PC to be against things like that. Now it seems to me it's considered uncool to be aware of such things, or uncool to care. I find that just fascinating, but I also find it dangerous. That's what's going to allow for "Big Brother," or whatever you want to call it, to come to power. Complacency is the tool they need do what they want. When I wrote the album *The Herd* five years ago, that was a premonition of these times.

It's a very apocalyptic album.

It's funny. Since 1995, none of the ideas that I put into our records get picked up on. Very few people seem to even grasp any more that there are ideas behind the records. I guess that era's over. But that's always been my energy, to protect myself and protect my destiny, and protect the people I care about. And that's the energy that I put into my music. In the past I could find soul mates with that energy all over the place, people who had the same mind-set. Now it's very, very rare. Therefore, where I'm heading musically is definitely affected

by that because there's very little inspiration out there for me to grab on to. I have a feeling that I'm just going to have to start doing music more for myself than for others. That was the vision behind the last record we did, *The Power In One*. ¶ I spent over a year trying to find out what was important to people, what meant something to people as a whole—youth and creative people. And it was just an empty void until a friend of mine mentioned that maybe the future is going to be based more on the individual. The survivors are going

What do you attribute that to?

There's a lot of technology being used against society. The cutting edge of technology is being used against us. That's what I wrote in the Echelon article. But then you have to wonder if people are changing because of evolution. It could be natural. One of my pet theories is that everybody, no matter who they are, is subconsciously clairvoyant. If that were true, then the masses would have an idea of what the future is. It's far removed from your con-

No, I never collect anything.

What happened with the other band members when you moved to Phoenix? Did they move with you?

Yes. [Drummer] Steve Plouf and his wife are partners in Zeno Records. They moved here about a year after I moved here. Brad Davidson moved back to London and then he moved back to Portland, and I haven't heard from him in about a year. But The Wipers never really was a band, it was a recording con-

So I thought, since we're putting this out on our own label, it would be cool to end the Wipers idea the way it started out: doing things completely ourselves and representing ourselves. We didn't release any photos, and we haven't toured off of it. It's been kind of nice because we've had to answer to no one.

to be the people that have strength inside themselves. That idea clicked, and that's the idea behind that record. But that's why I called it the last Wipers record. Even if The Wipers do make another record, *Power in One* is the end of the chapter for the ideas and the energy that I had in the beginning. Those ideas seem to have run their course. I never wrote for myself in the beginning. From day one until the last record I did, I never wrote for myself.

Will you keep observing people?

Well of course, because when you make a record, it can't be just for yourself. You're not the only person that's going to listen to it. The way I see it is that in order to write a record that's personal for many people, you have to look into where their destinies are, where their futures are. If you want to write about something that's going to be relevant to a lot of people without being completely superficial, you have to look pretty deeply. That used to come real natural back in the eighties, when it wasn't rare to have a complete stranger come up to you and communicate. It was commonplace. Now it's very rare.

scious mind, but your subconscious is so powerful that it has an effect on your demeanor. ¶ If that's true, then possibly people already know the future and are reacting to something that confuses them, and are being pushed farther inside of themselves. It's like people have given up on themselves. That's the feeling I've gotten from a lot of things involving music, involving young people. I've seen a huge change in the way their creativity is expressed. Or the passion they feel for their creativity. That passion is a powerful force. I don't claim to know what happened to it.

What music do you listen to these days?

I don't, really, because I'm always working with it. There are times when I won't touch a guitar for a year, or listen to any music. I do that on purpose, because then when I come back to it I'll have a different approach. But I don't listen to a lot of music especially when I'm writing. I don't have time to enjoy it because I'm always involved with it, but also because I don't want to be subconsciously influenced by anything. I want to keep what I'm doing as virgin as possible.

Do you collect records, or did you ever?

cept. And it still kind of is. We haven't found a permanent bass player, and we refuse to go look for one because it's always a problem. I figured that if it was meant to be a band, it would just be one. But it's hard to find people that are interested in the same things and have the same passion for things. That's something you can't just create, it has to happen. ¶ I'm just now starting to think about another recording project, but I haven't yet set a direction for it. It's definitely going to be a little different. I don't know whether to use the Wipers name anymore, because I wanted to keep the idea of the Wipers the same as it always was. Even the last record started out as a solo record. The last four songs were some solo material I was going to do, whereas a lot of other songs I had sounded like Wipers material. So I thought, since we're putting this out on our own label, it would be cool to end the Wipers idea the way it started out: doing things completely ourselves and representing ourselves. We didn't release any photos, and we haven't toured off of it. It's been kind of nice because we've had to answer to no one. ☺

Gary Himelfarb recaptured his independence two years ago when he bought back all the shares of his reggae label, RAS, from Rounder Records. His company had recently sold its distribution wing, and was solely a record label, a simpler operation. This was just the latest twist in the unusual history of RAS Records, which had been conceived in Himelfarb's Maryland basement in 1979 and has blossomed into one of the most dependable and revered record companies in reggae music.

In the world of RAS, Himelfarb, a low-key Jewish guy, is known as "Doctor Dread"—a moniker he first assumed on his renowned "Night of the Living Dread" reggae program on WHFS in the late '70s and early '80s. With his start in radio and the success of RAS, Dr. Dread has spent the past 20 years realizing his own blend of DIY-infused independence—a blend that's unique even in a town known for its allegiance to DIY.

RAS occupies a zone in the DC musical landscape distinct from the area's independent punk labels. Beyond its focus on a different genre of music, RAS has taken a more commercially-aggressive and internationally-oriented approach to the record business than most of its punk counterparts.

Over the years, the RAS catalog has grown unbelievably, spanning roots to dub to dance hall, featuring legendary artists such as Black Uhuru, Yellowman, Bunny Wailer, Israel Vibration, Sly & Robbie, and Tiger. There is even a Bob Marley interview album on RAS, So



We're on a whole different level: it's a different set of rules. Reggae is more of an underground phenomenon, it's not really a mainstream thing except for the occasional song that breaks through.

Much Things to Say. At the same time, many of the lesser-known RAS releases have only sold several thousand copies in the US, and the music is supported by a relatively small and devoted audience.

...

I first met Dr. Dread in the summer of 1983 after a Toots and the Maytals show at the Wax Museum, a long-defunct DC club. I went to the show with my friends Ethan, DK, and Bobby Sullivan (who I would later play with in Soul Side), and our high expectations from the Maytals had been far surpassed. Mid-set, Toots had built up such a fever pitch that the four of us, in some bizarre white-boy-spasm, stormed the stage. The rest of the audience followed. Unintimidated, Toots stood firm on deck and shook his ass with us, finishing out the set.

A RAS photographer, Tommy Noonan, was shooting the concert and approached us after the show to let us know that he had captured our insurgence on film. He then introduced us to his friend, Dr. Dread. We were blown away, still dripping with sweat and astounded by the presence of one of our favorite DJs. Dr. Dread told us about RAS, his fledgling label and distribution company, and invited us to stop by the warehouse, which did; within a few weeks, I had the coolest job in my high school.

I was one of the very first RAS employees, coming on board as the label's second release, *Come on Over* by Freddie McGregor, was hitting the shelves of record stores in the US. RAS had debuted a year earlier with *Rastafari Liveth* by Peter Broggs, an unknown name at that time, but the Freddie McGregor album would stamp RAS onto the international reggae map. At age 16, I couldn't have been happier than packing up boxes of reggae albums while hanging out

with Eek-A-Mouse, Augustus Pablo, Sister Carol, or whoever happened to be passing through the warehouse on any given day.

Scarcely a year later, I would find myself in Montego Bay, Jamaica, having traveled as part of the RAS crew to Reggae Sunsplash '84. The following year, after Sunsplash '85, I drove across Jamaica with Tommy (the RAS photographer), along with his daughter and singer Peter Broggs. When we arrived in Kingston, we were repeatedly pulled over by the cops, whose suspicions were aroused by the sight of a huge Rasta in a car with three white tourists. The cops could only think one thing: marijuana. As it so happens, one time when we were pulled over, Broggs was holding. In fact, we had spent the day "in the yard," hanging with his urban brethren and their wondrous hookas. One thing led to another (Broggs and Tommy were both a bit curt with the heavily armed officers) and we were all thrown up against the car in the middle of a Kingston traffic jam and searched from head to toe.

Suddenly the scenery shifted and we were in a reggae B-movie: Peter Broggs, who had shoved his bag of weed down his pants moments before stepping out of the car, proclaimed to one of the cops, "You won't find anything on me, Mr. Officer. The only thing you will find in my hand is a microphone singing my praises to JAH!" Through what could only have been divine intervention, we got out of there without even a traffic ticket.

Traversing Kingston's ghettos gave me a heightened appreciation for Dr. Dread's tales of strolling through the city's streets unharassed. Even so, this was merely one facet of his relationship with reggae music that left me in awe. And while his approach to running a record business may lack the anti-corporate fervor that fuels many punk labels, the independence of RAS is now as secure as it has ever been. I spoke with Dr. Dread at SOB's in Manhattan on the first night of a 3-week tour that he was embarking upon with Chilean reggae band Gondwana.

Interview by Johnny Temple

Is it true that you hiked across Jamaica when you were younger?

My first trip to Jamaica was in 1977. I looked at a map and found a place called Fruitful Vale, and I decided I wanted to go there, but it was up in the mountains. I got off a bus in the town of Old Harbour and walked to Bog

Walk—it's about 40 miles or so. I just walked casually through the countryside. Jamaicans would call me into their house and talk to me. That's really how I got to know Jamaica. Whenever I tell a Jamaican I walked from Old Harbour to Bog Walk, their jaw drops.

Were you already pretty heavily into reggae at that point?

Oh yeah. And into Rasta—I had dreadlocks and a beard and was just totally into Jamaican culture.

Shortly after that, you started RAS records in your house. When did you move it out of your basement?

We moved from my basement to our first warehouse, where you worked, in 1982. When our second album, *Come on Over* by Freddie McGregor, was first coming out, we got an order from England for 1000 vinyl copies. We were going nuts. A week later they called back and said "We need another 1000."

How are things at the label these days?

Things at RAS are interesting. It's getting a little more difficult to survive in a world where most of the reggae people buy dancehall, and we're really trying to do things outside of the dancehall realm.

I remember you preferring roots reggae to dancehall, but I figured that dancehall is a reality in reggae that you had to accept.

I would like to do more dancehall with some of the more roots-conscious singers, but there aren't that many of them around. It seems like the dancehall artists are almost like the rap artists: The flavor of the month. We're more into artist development and career development, and I'm sticking to that track.

Do you like the simplicity of being independent and of running a label and not having to worry about the distribution?

Absolutely. There is a lot more time to focus on production, and on the label. It's a really nice group of people who work here, so it is a good environment for working. I'm very happy here.

Do you still spend a lot of time in Jamaica?

Yeah, I'm down there on a very regular basis. I just recorded an album of all

Disney songs in reggae as part of our "Reggae For Kids" series, which have been our biggest selling records ever because they go totally beyond the reggae market.

Do you enjoy working on that? Is that an example of something that is very commercial and is also a pleasure to work on?

Yeah, man, I love it. I got to work with 11 different artists from Bunny Wailer to Luciano to Marcia Griffiths and Don Carlos—all great artists singing great songs. It turned out really well. In fact, Disney has even made us an offer to put it out themselves, but we'll probably hang on to it.

You said that BMG wasn't very good at marketing reggae in the US. Do you see RAS as an independent company playing by a different set of rules than the major labels? Or are you just a small fish surrounded by a bunch of bigger ones, and you happen to know a lot more about the music?

I think a little bit of both. Reggae is a small pond. We're a bigger fish in that pond. No major label would be content with the number of units we're selling.

I'm familiar with that phenomenon.

[laughs] Yeah. When Alanis Morissette's second album sells only three million, it's a disappointment to a major. We're on a whole different level; it's a different set of rules. Reggae is more of an underground phenomenon, it's not really a mainstream thing except for the occasional song that breaks through. But sometimes those big songs can end an artist's career, too, because the follow-up faces high expectations. When that doesn't come, the big companies get disinterested.

What kind of experience have you had branching into genres of music other than reggae? I remember when RAS tried to move into rock music in 1988 by releasing the *No More Censorship* album by the former Dischord band, *Scream*.

It was interesting. I went to a *Scream* show at the old 9:30 Club and saw the excitement of the young people, and it woke up something inside of me from my earlier days. Going to a number of their rehearsals and hearing the songs they were working on, I thought they were pretty exciting. In the studio it was

a very cool vibe, and I'm just sorry that we couldn't do more to have marketed the group, because we really don't know how to sell that kind of music. It kind of forced me to go back into my reggae shell. ¶ I would love to produce more groups outside of reggae. I think I could bring some interesting ideas to the mix. But it just seems that I know reggae best. I know the market and I still love the music. Even though I would like to try other things, from a business point of view, any time I've tried it, it hasn't worked. *Scream* is just sitting there on the shelf collecting dust.

You are probably busy enough running a reggae business.

It was really difficult. We thought it would be a much easier go of it. I guess a label like Dischord could have sold a lot more of that *Scream* record than we did.

Are there any artists now that you see who are articulating any fresh or inspirational political visions?

Well, the key word you use is "fresh." A lot has been said, and it is in how you say it that makes it fresh. Gondwana from Chile have lived under the oppressive regime of Pinochet all of these years, so they are like a breath of fresh air. Coming out of Jamaica, I hear less of it, and that's very unfortunate. That's why I call this album by Gondwana *The Second Coming*, because there is a new emergence of reggae from outside of Jamaica that's going to be more expressive of what people are going through. Like in Sri Lanka—in areas where the Tamil rebels are being oppressed—maybe some reggae will come out of that. ¶ I think you're not hearing it as much out of Jamaica, and that's very disappointing for me. That's why when you asked me how things are going at RAS, I said "interesting." It's harder and harder for me to find things that I feel are stimulating enough for people that it is worthwhile for us to release.

Political issues in reggae have always seemed like an area that has stimulated you.

It always has, particularly what the music reveals about life and the world and the message; about how to live. That's part of the whole Rastafarian culture, as well, and that's always been a big part of RAS Records.

Can you explain the "message" a little more?

The message is about equality and treating people with respect. In Jamaica, when you see somebody, you both put out your fists and bang them together and say the word "respect." What that means is "you respect me, I respect you." Unity with people regardless of race or where people are from—just trying to live a positive and upful life. With the condition the world is in, trying to see some beauty in it, but at the same time recognizing that there's a lot of economic oppression that we struggle to fight against. I think it's important that people are reminded that yeah, the economy is doing great, but maybe not for everybody.

Do you see reggae crossing over into the realm of activist politics?

Sometimes it does. You've got a guy like [veteran dub poet] Linton Kwesi Johnson in England who is definitely a political activist and encourages political activism. He's more intellectual and is able to understand certain elements of political movements. In Jamaica, Sizzla has called for Jamaicans to burn down the country. There definitely are some more radical elements in the music and in what they are advocating.

I remember you once saying that outside of DC and New York, the city that you knew best was Kingston.

That's still true.

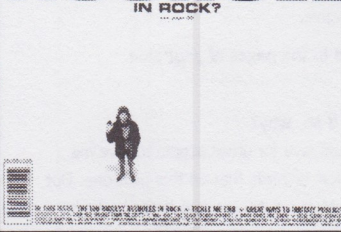
I also remember you saying that when you're there, you aren't hassled a lot for being a white guy. You can go into all of the studios in Kingston; you know everybody and you are treated with respect.

It's incredible, Johnny, the way people treat me in Jamaica. They know I'm not in there to just make a quick buck. I've been doing this for 20 years. I just try to be fair to people. I can't eat the whole pie, you've got to split it up, and they recognize that. Even making this Disney kids record. Every artist just signed the contract without reading it. They said, "Go on, Doc, go do your thing, man." That kind of respect and trust is worth way more than money. To be able to go to Kingston and have people treat me the way they do is really my reward. You can't even put it in words. ©

20

QUESTIONS WITH THE ZINE CHUNKLET

Chunklet
IS THIS GUY THE BIGGEST
ASSHOLE
IN ROCK?



1. How long have you been doing your zine and what issue are you on?

Since the Carter administration. There should be a number on the issue that you are holding. Take that number and add the number six, then subtract the number five.

2. How long do you plan on doing it?

Until I get famous.

3. What would cause you to quit?

Stardom.

4. How do you distribute your zine?

I strap them to the backs of rescue dogs and point them in the direction of each large metropolis.

5. Why is your zine called what it's called?

Because it is a catchy name for a mini-series.

6. What were the runner-up names for your zine?

Roots, The Thornbirds, Shogun, and Mother, May I Sleep With Danger?

7. What would you rank as the three main subjects you cover?

Character actors, Audio/Video Verité, and Walter Matthau.

8. What's the hardest part about doing your zine?

Having to deal with people who lack a sense of humor.

9. What is the most rewarding part?

Having to deal with people who lack a sense of humor.

10. Are you doing your zine for free records?

Yeah, comedic slander seems to bring in droves of promos.

11. What's the best and worst interview you've ever done?

Best: Rip Torn

Worst: Zodiac Mindwarp

12. Quote your favorite thing ever said in the pages of your zine.

"FUCK YES!!!!!" —David Grubbs

13. Do you write everything yourself? If so, why?

I have this revolutionary approach where I tell writers that they can write about things besides politics and their favorite bands.

14. How is your zine produced?

There was a police/buddy dramatic comedy, or dramedy, in the '70s called *Holmes and Yo Yo*. The Yo Yo character was a humanoid robot that would spit crime statistics from slit in its chest. I own a similar, crime fighting android that prints each issue individually.

15. Handwritten vs. Typewriter vs. Computer?

Certainly not handwritten, since that would mean that I would have more in common with Aaron Cometbus, and the simple use of oxygen is enough. Most people are technophobes or luddites for effect, not out of necessity—it's very "punk rock." I don't subscribe to the "it looks like shit so it must be the real deal" aesthetic. People past the age of 25 who produce handwritten or white-out-smeared zines should be put out of their misery.

16. What other zines inspire you?

Forced Exposure (RIP), *Entertainment Weekly*, *Conflict* (really RIP), *Cat Fancy*, *American Shotgun Fanatic*, whatever that zine is that is comprised entirely of tear-stained hate letters from Weasel Walter, and *The Cimarron Weekend*.

17. What is "selling out?"

Careerist rock writing. Putting out a publication (a term that I prefer) that only features positive reviews and book-report style pieces with no humor or personality. For some people, journalism and/or true entertainment takes a backseat to constant relationship-stroking between writer and record label. I don't understand why anyone who genuinely cared about music would want to read something like *CMJ* or *Puncture*—magazines that only contain neutral or positive text. Does a fucking computer program write those things?!

18. If you could live off your zine, would you?

No, I would live off of being famous.

19. If you had a chance to interview someone who you would most likely never have a chance to talk to, who would it be?

Orson Welles, because he was the smartest American to ever make something of himself, and because he is dead.

20. Describe your dream interview (who, where, what setting).

David Lee Roth. I would be interviewing him while we walked through Central Park, minutes before he got busted for carrying a dime bag.

Chunklet PO Box 2814, Athens GA 30612-0814

20 QUESTIONS WITH THE ZINE I HATE THIS PART OF TEXAS

1. How long have you been doing your zine and what issue are you on?

I started doing a zine called *Pants That Don't Fit* in 1992. It got to issue 10. Then I did a zine called *Malt Liquor and Sandwich Cookies* for a while (each issue was different: a pocket-sized zine, a coloring book, and an audio tape), and now it's *I Hate This Part of Texas*, which has only had one issue so far. I was also involved in the creation of *Perverts at Home* and the *DIY Guide*.

2. How long do you plan on doing it?

I can't foresee a time when I won't be inspired to create some sort of zine.

3. What would cause you to quit?

If I felt that there was not one single person that had any interest at all in reading what I have to offer, and I also felt a total lack of inspiration and motivation towards doing it. Then I would probably quit.

4. How do you distribute your zine?

These days, mostly just giving it to friends and people that I meet. I had little cardboard display boxes for them at the sleazy 24-hour diner and the sleazy liquor store in Ann Arbor. And also through Tree of Knowledge distribution, which is probably a step up from the cardboard display boxes.

5. Why is your zine called what it's called?

It was graffiti I saw in an Oklahoma rest stop—probably my favorite bathroom graffiti ever. That fit well with this zine having a lot to do with travel, and also I seem to have a thing for long, goofy zine names so it fit in nicely with that.

6. What were the runner-up names for your zine?

Speak in Secret Alphabet, Crackpot, Tangent, Blue Yodels, Dislocated, Toolbox, Hit or Miss, Shit from Shinola, 'Til the Wheels Come Off. I'll probably end up using all of them, at some point.

7. What would you rank as the three main subjects you cover?

- Self-mythology: my own stories and shenanigans, as well as those of my friends, comrades, and peoples.
- The DIY community and what goes on: This includes radical sexuality, travel (freight trains and hitchhiking), activism, and more.
- Various: Love, inspiration, community, work, bicycles, gardens, stories, folktales, legends, maps, politics, books, cops, food, population migrations, local goings-on, silly drawings.

8. What's the hardest part about doing your zine?

It used to be that period that begins about three months after putting out an issue, when I begin to really hate everything in it, and to notice all of the spelling mistakes. I don't get that so much anymore; I don't want to sound like a total sap, but right now none of it is bothersome to me whatsoever. Sometimes I complain about having to copy it, spending hours upon hours inhaling toner fumes in the fluorescent-lit zombie tomb environment of Kinko's.

9. What is the most rewarding part?

The connections made and friendships built. Knowing that I'm part of creating and cultivating an amazing community. When people respond to me about things that I've written, tell me incredible things like how much it touched them. Seeing my zine in people's bathrooms, bookshelves and living rooms. Getting to communicate and exchange information and ideas with like-minded folks; at the same time, to be able to express myself and expose my community's ideas and goings-on to people who don't know much about it. Taking an active part in the process of self-documentation. Engaging in an alternative economy, such as trading zines for other zines, tapes, various and sundry goods and services. Getting to know people at the local post office (that's when you really feel part of your neighborhood, when you're chatting it up at places like the post office and the corner store).

10. Are you doing your zine for free records?

I get maybe one or two cd's a year, and they are always shitty. If I'm doing it to get anything for free, it would be zines. Oh, and I'm also doing it for the fame and the sex appeal of being a total zine nerd.

11. What's the best and worst interview you've ever done?

I don't do interviews too often, at least not for my own zine. Probably the best would be Steve at the San Jose Post Office. That was an illuminating conversation with a man who has a good perspective.

12. Quote your favorite thing ever said in the pages of your zine.

"You bend ovah, cassanova."

13. Do you write everything yourself? If so, why?

In this last one I did, pretty much. I would love for other people to give me stuff, and I think I'll make more of an effort towards that on this next one. But mostly, I just get an idea of what I want to put out there and if people have given me neat stuff, then that goes in too.

14. How is your zine produced?

The divine intervention of merciful deities known in our world as various hookups, scams, and outright theft. Sacrificial offerings are made to ensure that these deities are sated. Lots of coffee. Nights that end with the sun rising and blinding my bloodshot eyes, which are dry and sticky not unlike a glue stick that has been left with the cap off for too long.

15. Handwritten vs. Typewriter vs. Computer?

I'll take handwritten and typewriter teaming up in a grudge match against computer any day. I prefer the aesthetic of typed and handwritten, but I do use computers out of convenience, sometimes. Strictly as word processors—none of that Pagemaker layout crap. Up the cut and paste!

16. What other zines inspire you?

Nosedive, *Full Gallop*, *Four in a Morning*, *El Otro Lado*, *Doris*, *Burn Collector*, *Scam*.

17. What is "selling out?"

In terms of zines, I would say that it has to do with changing one's content to cater not only to advertisers, but to the general mass-culture mainstream appetites, for sales to be the bottom line. Unless of course that's how you started out—then, I don't know.

18. If you could live off your zine, would you?

That's an unimaginable idea, really. If I didn't have to change the way I do things, meet deadlines or deal with shitty distributors. Really, that just fits into my larger dream of society being dramatically restructured so that we all have access to the things that we need, as well as lots of time for relaxation, education, fun and fulfillment. Wage-slavery wouldn't exist, individuals would work for the greater good of the community which would work for the basic fulfillment of the individual, and so the notion of having to "live off" of anything simply wouldn't apply.

19. If you had a chance to interview someone who you would most likely never have a chance to talk to, who would it be?

A cop immediately following his/her shift at a huge demo, like Seattle or Philadelphia. Someone who was involved in the Spanish revolution of 1936. The person who administers death penalty executions at a prison.

20. Describe your dream interview (who, where, what setting).

Utah Phillips, Emma Goldman, and Luther the Jet on a boxcar riding through the Sierra foothills, joined at some point as well by Mother Jones and Studs Terkel.

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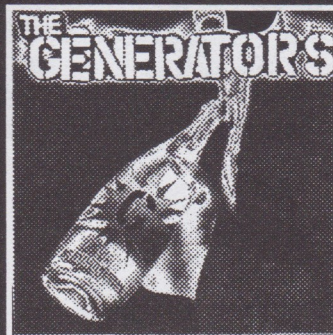
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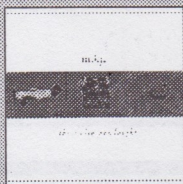
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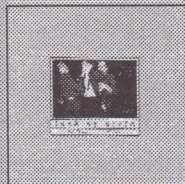
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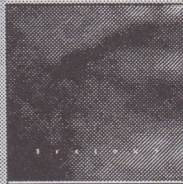
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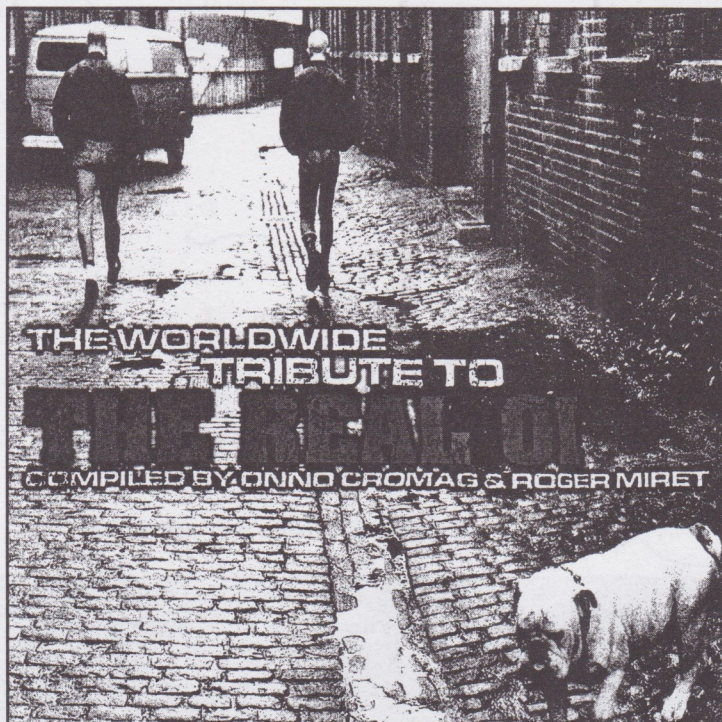
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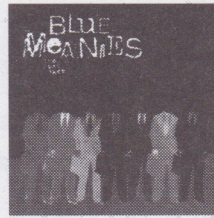
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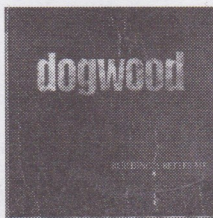
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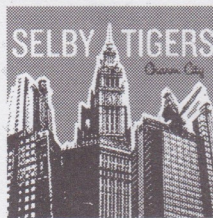
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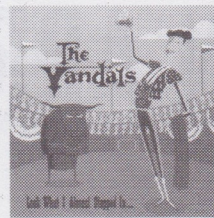
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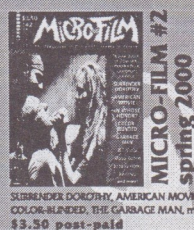
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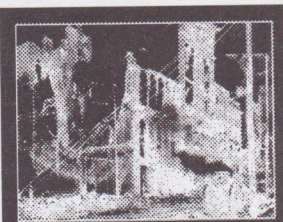
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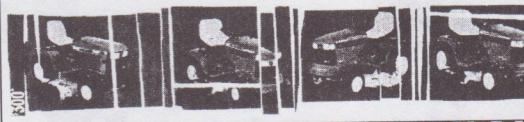
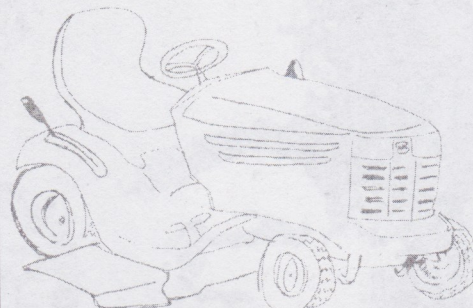
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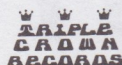
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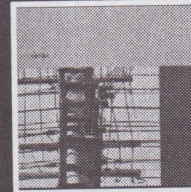
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y of harDCore TING DC THE MAP

by Mark Andersen and Mark Jenkins

Part One: Putting DC on the Map

On January 20, 1981 Ronald Reagan became the 40th President of the United States, ushering in the most conservative administration since perhaps the 1930s. Reagan's policies would soon inspire dramatic political responses from many in the punk underground. At the time of the former actor's inauguration, however, Minor Threat was not thinking about the future.

"Hey! What I want to know is," demanded vocalist Ian MacKaye, "when is '77 coming back?"

With that taunt hanging in the air, guitarist Lyle Preslar hit the chords of "Minor Threat" and the band's anthem rang out, rousing the small group of teenage punks at the front of dc space's stage. In what was only Minor Threat's third public performance, its confidence and power were impressive.

MacKaye's crack was directed at a pair of reviews of the Unheard Music Festival that had suggested the Georgetown punks were hopelessly nostalgic for 1977. Former *Unicorn Times* editor Richard Harrington, now writing for the *Washington Post*, had dismissed the Georgetown punk bands as "caught in a rapid time warp that transported them to 1975 punk London" and claimed that "of the six bands last night, none showed an ounce of origi-

nality, style, or substance." *Unicorn Times* writer Charles McCardell also identified the bands as class-of-'77 wannabes, and suggested that "their perfunctory playing and overt posing implied that they wished not to be taken seriously."

Of course these young bands wanted to be taken seriously, but they were increasingly interested in the reaction only of their peers. They felt that older rock fans and critics had missed the point entirely, and were far more guilty than they were of pining for punk's past. Four years away from the seemingly distant 1977, these kids had something new and they knew it.

Minor Threat was opening that night for the Slickee Boys, who were loved by many Georgetown punks. Next to the younger scene, however, the band now seemed antiquated. "We'll try not to be long," MacKaye jeered. "We know you're all eager to see the Slickee Boys!" The set was indeed completed quickly, and the younger band made way for the Slickees. It was the last time the two groups would share the same stage.

The next night at the 9:30 Club, Minor Threat shared the bill with young locals SOA, Black Market Baby, and another, officially unscheduled act. The Untouchables were about to disband and wanted to play a farewell show, but club co-owner Dody

Bowers had said no. Midway through Minor Threat's set, MacKaye mourned the end of the Untouchables and told the crowd to "watch for their last show soon." It wasn't a long wait. As the final chords of "Stepping Stone" faded, the Untouchables emerged from the crowd, grabbed Minor Threat's instruments and launched into "If The Kids Are United."

Furious, Bowers pushed her way through the crowd toward the sound board. Halfway into the song, Eddie Janney's guitar went out, but the crowd's singalong propelled the tune to its last verse. The guitar came back just in time to bring the song to its closing chorus.

As the club owner confronted the conspirators, SOA took the stage. "Minor Threat has just been banned from the 9:30 Club," singer Henry Garfield proclaimed, "guess who the fuck is next!" The band smashed into "Gonna Have to Fight," a call for the Georgetown punks to battle to protect each other and their growing scene.

By now, the Georgetown punks had a reputation as brawlers. The day after Reagan's inauguration, the teenagers were the subject of a *Washington Post* story that described "a small but flourishing, youth-oriented, music-centered subculture that has gravitated to the streets of Georgetown. Too young to get into many of the clubs, they just hang out at places like Station Break, a Georgetown arcade, or the Haagen-Daaz ice cream shop." The pictures showed the "atypical, apolitical, and seemingly amoral" punks walking down M Street, proudly wearing their chains, boots, and leather jackets.

The article—the first where the teen punks define themselves as "hardcore"—explained that "punks dress to maim if not quite kill," a characterization supported by a Garfield remark: "We have a strict policy—if a bouncer at a nightclub lays a hand on one of us, it's ten on one 'till his ears bleed."

"We don't say 'fuck the world,' we say 'fuck the people around us'—you know, the people who put us down for the way we act, for the way we dress," MacKaye told the *Post*. Despite Reagan's arrival a mere dozen blocks from Georgetown, teen-punk politics didn't tend to look beyond their own neighborhood.

That wasn't true for the Bad Brains, an older punk band that many of the teenage punks took inspiration from. Reagan's early actions helped confirm Bad Brains' increasingly apocalyptic outlook. To vocalist HR, "It was like a vision. It just dawned on me that things were going to get bad—really bad—for America."

Not all the teenage punks ignored the new administration, however. John Stabb wrote "Hey Ronnie" for the GIs; Danny Ingram, just beginning to work with Nathan Strejcek in a new band called Youth Brigade, penned a broadside called "Moral Majority."

Still, Garfield recalls, "early DC punk was not political. It comes from what I'm into: soul.

Guitars with politics bore me. I relate to music on the level of sex and death—sweat, blood, cum, sleepless nights, insecurity."

At the time, MacKaye echoed this inward looking ethic: "If you want to keep an eye on

what's going on, that's cool, but you are not as capable of changing politics as you are capable of changing yourself. If you're able to change yourself, that's for the better. When you get that out of the way, then maybe other things will shape up."

Even if most of the teenage punks were not politically engaged, they seemed revolutionary to their high school peers. "Anytime a group of kids get together outside adult authority, it's political," remembers Guy Picciotto, at the time a young punk from Georgetown Day School. "When you became a punk, you knew it was a big deal. You were going to lose old friends. It was a radical step."

• • •

One thing did open the DC teen punk scene to a wider world: the release of the Teen Idles' single—the first single released on Dischord Records, a project started by MacKaye, Strejcek and Teen Idles drummer Jeff Nelson ("The first of many posthumous releases!" laughs Nelson in retrospect). The records dribbled out, and the feedback rushed in. Michigan fanzine *Touch and Go* called it "this year's best single," and an obscure San Francisco punk radio show called *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll* made "Get Up and Go" its number one pick for several weeks in a row. Clearly, there were others out there who shared the DC punks' vision.

Initially, the Dischord partners had thought of the label as a one-off project. But with all the new bands that had formed, they decided to keep the label going as long as there was local music they wanted to put out. "Our goal was not to make a lot of money," Nelson says, "but to help as many of our friends' bands as we could."

Money, however, was immediately an issue. Before any new records could be released, the \$600 invested in the Teen Idles' single had to be recouped. Minor Threat was the obvious followup release, but MacKaye and Nelson didn't have the cash to do it. Eager to get an SOA record out, Garfield raised the money himself. Thus SOA's *No Policy* EP became the second Dischord release.

The album was aptly named. "SOA songs were anti-everything I didn't like," says Garfield. "I hated my job, hated cops, hated girls . . . it was all about no fun, fear, oppression. My message was 'Kill The World.'"

Stabb's fanzine *Critical List* was among the first to hail SOA: "They're what it's all about—a bunch of kids making a lotta loud fast noise!" Of course, Stabb also wrote that SOA and his other favorite bands—including Black Market Baby, Minor Threat, Youth Brigade, the Untouchables, and his own GI—"prove that you don't have to have lots of fucken talent to be good, ya just hafta play fast!!"

Of the EP's songs, "Gate Crashers" attacks the older punk scene, "Lost In Space" derides Garfield's drug addled peers, and "Blackout" details the singer's psychic struggle: "War going on inside my head/I can't get to sleep/I'd rather be dead." Many of the songs—"Gang Fight," "Warzone," "Gonna Have To Fight," "Riot"—reflected Garfield's enthusiasm for hand-to-hand combat.

Garfield tended to explode when faced by physical conflict, going to unpredictable extremes. "I was in lots of fights," remembers MacKaye. "I'd just try to teach the guy a lesson, no permanent damage, just a bruise or two. I'd be stopping, I'd look over my

"I was in lots of fights," remembers MacKaye. "I'd just try to teach the guy a lesson, no permanent damage, just a bruise or two. I'd be stopping, I'd look over my shoulder and Henry would be dragging his guy down the stairs and kicking him! I'd have to go and try to stop him."

shoulder and Henry would be dragging his guy down the stairs and kicking him! I'd have to go and try to stop him."

When the Teen Idles played in San Francisco in 1980 with the Dead Kennedys and the Circle Jerks, the small band of DC punks that came along were amazed at the ferocious dancing on display by a group of punks from Huntington Beach, California. Watching the Huntington Beach kids in action, Garfield and his friends had realized how much power a gang could wield. Gang-like solidarity was a practical reaction to the continuing problem of attacks on punks in Georgetown.

"I am fascinated by gangs," MacKaye later told the *Washington Post*. "I don't like going out and beating people's asses but I like the idea that if I have trouble, I have a lot of friends that are going to help me out. 'Stand Up' was like the first song that [Minor Threat] wrote. At the time, there was a lot of violence at shows. To me, it was a great thing to see all these people get out there and be able to put back the bouncers, put back whoever was hurting somebody else. It's good to see that you have friends like that."

But "it's a fine line," he admitted. "I like to bruise the ego, nothing more. But sometimes you get taken overboard. I might get in an altercation with someone and just want to cool the guy down basically. My friends might destroy him—which is certainly not what I had in mind."

The teen punks' zest for rough dancing, fast music, and street skirmishes was also a way to set themselves apart from the older crowd, which they saw as tame, arty, pretentious, and drug-addled—but the scene's reputation began to draw outsiders who wanted only trouble. "Like any new society, it started off idealistic," Garfield recalls. "The scene was so small everyone knew each other. By the late summer of 1980, violence started as new people came in from the suburbs. We'd get marines, bikers, rednecks, tough guys, thick-necked young wise-asses. We'd fight outsiders. We didn't care if it was fair, this guy was fucking with our little piece of the world, so we'd stomp the shit out of him. That was our attitude. We didn't go out to start any fights, we just wanted to do our thing like we had the year before."

When the Georgetown punks took their gang ethos and underdog attitude to New York, conflict was inevitable. The first clash came at a Black Flag show at Manhattan's Peppermint Lounge—the band's first-ever East Coast show—which MacKaye recounted in Glen Friedman's photozine, *My Rules*:

"The club was packed. We sat content that we were finally going to see them. They were so important to us, almost living legends, they represented that total release, that personal rebellion that we felt so strongly. We had driven 250 miles to a town we loathed, waited in line to all hours of the night. We were laughed at, ridiculed for our social etiquette. We were definitely un-cool. How could we, coming from DC, have any idea what it was like to be Punk?



Georgetown skinheads

"It must have been 2 a.m. when they finally came on. All 14 of us gathered in front of the stage. There were eyes looking down on us and sideways comments all around. We were a little scared but hell-bent on doing what we set out to do. The tensions ran high, but we ran higher; the atmosphere was hard but we were harder. And when it was over, we had the last laugh. The city was still there but we had beaten it and it would remember. And it did."

Fanzine editor and musician Jack Rabid had a different perspective: "DC ruined the Black Flag show. They brought slam-dancing to New York. I hated them. You're just standing there to watch the band and suddenly you're getting rammed into." He thought the DC kids "were jerks. I didn't like their shaved head thing. It was just too macho."

The members of Black Flag, however, were impressed, especially after a 9:30 Club show with Minor Threat and Youth Brigade a few days after the Peppermint Lounge gig. Ending its brief embargo on hardcore, the club had allowed the music's return, but had prepared for the date by hiring extra bouncers to stand in front of the stage. To the teen punks, this was a provocation.

"That made the night so fun for us," MacKaye remembered. "Those motherfuckers were leaving with blood pouring. To me, that was justified aggression because it's our stage, that's the way it is."

"There is an old guard, there's about ten of us or more, this is in our blood," he said at the time. "I'm fucking 20 next month and it's not fucking 'fun-time' for me anymore, it's much more serious for me and I'll not have them fuck with my band, my music, my friends. This is what I do, I don't go to school, I got a fucking record label, I got a band. It's my life and I won't have people fuck with my life." Impressed by such vehemence, Black Flag began extolling the DC scene in interviews.

The next California band to make the DC connection was the Dead Kennedys. When they reached New York in April, the show began with MacKaye shaving heads onstage. This led *Village Voice* rock critic Robert Christgau to label the DC punks "muscleheads." In the same paper, Lester Bangs referred to the Georgetowners as "a phalanx of big ugly skinhead goons imported from Washington DC, apparently the same guys Black Flag brought up for their show to hurl themselves on the crowd with brutal but monotonous regularity in suddenly institutionalized slamdancing."

Dead Kennedys frontman Jello Biafra, however, sided with Washington over New York. "New York is the most overrated cultural center in the world except for Paris," he said. "In DC you've

got a bunch of young original bands. Here it's leftovers from the New York Dolls. When I heard about how all of the DC people we had met had showed up for Black Flag and wreaked havoc, I thought, 'Yeah, cool!'"

The Georgetown punks' most conspicuous New York outing came late in the year, when LA hardcore quartet Fear played *Saturday Night Live's* Halloween show. John Belushi had championed the band, but doubted that its appearance would have the impact of a punk club performance without a slam-dancing crowd. So he called MacKaye to recruit some DC punks to supply the requisite mayhem. Roughly 30 Washingtonians showed up, creating enough havoc that the cameras cut away in the midst of Fear's performance. "Saturday Night Riot," a *New York Post* headline blared the next day.

As the Dead Kennedys prepared to perform in DC, Biafra was surprised to receive a petition urging the Dead Kennedys to play the all-ages 9:30 Club rather than the Bayou. The petition was organized by Sean Finnegan, who was just beginning to assemble a band called Void in the "new town" of Columbia, Maryland, midway between Washington and Baltimore. "I knew there was a different kind of scene going on," Biafra says. "To get a petition signed by real people rather than some guy on the phone who you could visualize chomping on a cigar saying, 'Why don't you play my club?'"

Despite his concern that the band might be a "total art student disaster" live, Biafra arranged for Maryland art band Half Japanese to open the show—a band that many of the young punks disliked. But Biafra was enthralled that night by the group's new big-band lineup. Later, he would claim that "Half Japanese is the best art band in the world because they come from the guts and don't plot out what they're doing on graph paper. They just attack people with what they're doing."

The Dead Kennedys' set was a paroxysm of slamdancing and stage-diving during which Biafra repeatedly plunged into the crowd but never stopped singing. Energized by the crowd's abandon, he laughed and exclaimed, "Now all you've gotta do is take this kind of attitude and storm the White House and the Capitol Building!"

"We haven't had anything near this extreme so far," Biafra said after the show. "Instead of a few people standing around guzzling beer, here you've got everybody out on the dance floor, sweating, screaming, and mixing it up. DC is the only place around with a good hardcore punk scene like the West Coast's."

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As the DC hardcore scene expanded, it grew a bit more distant from a crucial inspiration, Bad Brains. The group was faulted for both its commercialism—embodied by the man Howard Wuelfing, an older DC punk, called a "money bags manager" Mo Sussman—and its new Rasta spirituality, which caused HR to prefer reggae to punk. As HR attributed his band's new musical direction to "the power of Jah," Stabb dismissed the group in *Critical List* as lost to religion.

Sussman paid for sessions at Omega Studios, a sophisticated 24-track recording studio in suburban Maryland. The band recorded a demo that included polished versions of five songs, including "I Luv I Jah," a roots reggae track, and two bracing punk outbursts, "I Against I" and "At the Movies." But the band's idealism often trumped the pragmatism of Sussman, who was trying to make Bad Brains more commercial without compromising their musical vision.

Sussman prepared to shop the tape to major labels, but the band was retreating from its former career goals. While Sussman tried to find a place for Bad Brains in the commercial mainstream, HR continued to look for a nonprofit venue for the band to play. Through a friend, he found the Wilson Center. The center's basement space was simple, spacious, and virtually indestructible, with a large sturdy stage—a perfect setup for hardcore punk shows.

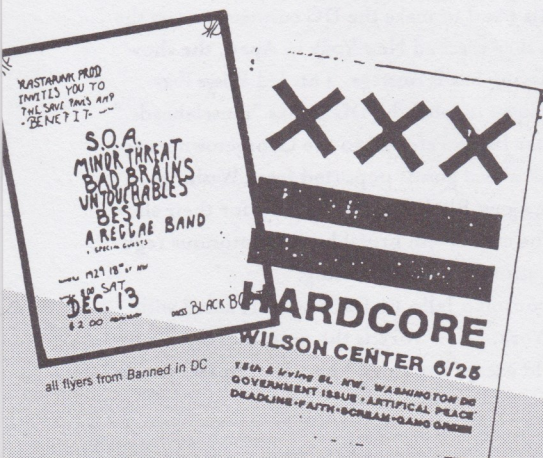
The Wilson Center was located at the confluence of three neighborhoods, Adams Morgan, Mount Pleasant, and Columbia Heights, all of which were home to an increasing number of refugees fleeing war-torn Central America. The center housed an employment center, a free clinic, and other social service facilities; to raise funds, the basement was rented for everything from Latin American dances to a Yippie-sponsored anti-Reagan "Counter-Inaugural Ball."

The venue's first punk performance was an overview of the burgeoning hardcore scene, including such established bands as Bad Brains, Minor Threat, Black Market Baby, GI, and SOA as well as more than a half dozen newer or lesser known ones: Red C, Law And Order, Broken Cross, Mod Subs, Prophecy, Scream, and Void. The latter two were the most prominent early hardcore bands to hail from the suburbs.

One of the people in the audience was Malcolm Riviera. It was the first DC show for the Raleigh, North Carolina resident, who had seen Bad Brains in his hometown and had driven five hours to investigate the DC punk explosion. Already a Bad Brains devotee, Riviera was elated by Minor Threat.

"I wasn't into it so much for the message," he remembers, "but I liked the fast angry alienated music. It was what I had been looking for. Minor Threat was better than the Sex Pistols. They were more angry, fast, loud, and tight and they were right there in front of my face. It was something all our own, watching the greatest bands in the world perform in

"Instead of a few people standing around guzzling beer, here you've got everybody out on the dance floor, sweating, screaming, and mixing it up. DC is the only place around with a good hardcore punk scene like the West Coast's." —Jello Biafra



front of you—what a rush, what an inspiration!" He made the decision there and then to move to DC. Throughout 1982 and '83, Riviera would sponsor a series of Wilson Center shows that would help make the basement space the home of DC hardcore.

Another new site for shows was Woodlawn High School, an alternative public school in nearby Arlington, Virginia. The first gig featured two local bands, mod-revival quartet Count 4 and teen punk band the Necros (not to be confused with the better-known Ohio group). In May, the school hosted Canadian agit-punk group DOA, which was accompanied by Jello Biafra, and four local bands: Minor Threat, SOA, Youth Brigade, and Scream.

The reaction to the latter demonstrated the hardcore crowd's clannishness; when Scream began to play, most of the audience walked out. Although Scream was strongly influenced by Bad Brains and lived only a few miles from Georgetown—in the Virginia suburb of Bailey's Crossroads, once the winter home of the Barnum & Bailey circus—it appeared to a puzzled Biafra that the quartet was evidently not in with the in-crowd.

Aside from being suburban, the band's only offenses were not dressing punk and occasionally playing covers. "They called us 'jocks who were trying to play punk,'" singer Pete Stahl remembers. Scream—which featured Pete's brother Franz on guitar, bassist Skeeter Thompson, and drummer Kent Stax—would later be accepted as one of the scene's most powerful bands, but their initial sense of being outsiders was never forgotten.

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While the Bad Brains had finally found the DC venue they were looking for, their relationship with manager Sussman was increasingly strained. It came to a head at a show in Chapel Hill, North Carolina that was scheduled for simulcast on radio and cable TV. Sussman flew down for the event, only to find the band without a singer as the 9 p.m. airtime approached. "It was 8 p.m., no HR. 8:30, no HR. 8:45, still no sign of HR," he remembers. "Finally, at 8:59 PM, HR comes in, disheveled, whacked out on marijuana or whatever, incoherent." The band was ultimately able to play, but the TV crew, already dismantling its gear when the vocalist arrived, packed up and left.

"After the show, I sat down with HR to find out the reason he was late and incoherent," says Sussman. "He had driven from Chapel Hill to DC"—a six-hour trip one way—"to help someone move furniture with the van and then had driven back again. I said, 'HR, you were going to be on television!' He said, 'Fuck you, my friend needed the van.'"

By then, Sussman estimates, he had spent more than \$40,000 on the band. "I said 'That's it, I can't take anymore. You guys aren't going to get anywhere. I quit.'"

"It wasn't the rest of the band," he notes. "It was HR. As he metamorphosed into a full fledged Rasta, he just wouldn't listen to reason."

Bad Brains still had ambitions, and without access to Sussman's checkbook DC didn't seem the place to fulfill them. The band left home for New York for the second time in their

career. In

the city, a teenage friend they knew from local band the Mad, David Hahn (later known as Dave Id), became Bad Brains' informal manager. Jerry Williams, who ran the Lower East Side performance space and four-track recording studio 171-A, was the band's soundman. Williams and the group were soon living, practicing, and recording at 171-A.

In New York, HR joined the Twelve Tribes of Israel, the Rasta group which had included Bob Marley. HR's obsession with Marley grew when he discovered that he and Marley were born in the same month, February, making them both members of the tribe of Joseph. Later describing himself as "engulfed" by his new faith community, HR began calling himself "Joseph I." The depth of commitment showed in his latest lyrics, which were full-throated exhortations for the destruction of Babylon and a cleansing revolution that would be led by what he described as "a new breed of youths who are going to be unconquerable"—kids like those in the Bad Brains' growing audience.

While such views surely seemed a bit much for the average concert-goer, if ever there was a band who could live up to such rhetoric, it was Bad Brains in this period. HR exhibited absolute, riveting conviction in live performance, backed by a band whose speed, precision and power was staggering. A New York area teenager named Lou who first saw the band around this time recalled thinking that "Bad Brains were these untouchable Rasta gods who were going lead some revolution." Later he would help form a band of his own called Sick Of It All.

Alerted to Bad Brains' burgeoning reputation, the Clash offered them a slot on a series of shows they were doing at Bonds, a Manhattan dance club. The idea was to showcase diverse opening acts, including Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, Funkapoltan, Bush Tetras, the Slits, as well as Bad Brains. The shows soon went awry: Police shut the club on the first night for overcrowding and some Clash fans heckled the supporting acts, especially Grandmaster Flash. Bad Brains went over well, but the band was disappointed by both the audience and the headliner.

"The Clash were something back in 1977 but now they've been sucked into the system, the record company bit, this world of drugs," said bassist Daryl Jenifer at the time. "They've got to have their collars starched up real straight. That's real false. We don't have no gimmick, I ain't no gimmick man. You see the Clash on stage and they're all high on some kind of speed. If I want some energy, I just drink some orange juice and go out and rock harder than all of them."

In New York, the band was approached by Neal Cooper, who had recently started the cassette-only label ROIR (Reach Out International Records), about releasing some of the work they were doing at 171-A. He wanted them to sign a contract, but they were wary.

"They would just be hanging out in my office sitting on the floor smoking some weed and we would talk about it," Cooper

recalls. "Finally I had a contract drawn up. I watched as they tore it up. I got another and they tore that up. I got a third one which they tore up as well. They were very suspicious of record companies, of contracts being meaningless, feeling that things should be done on a matter of trust. They didn't understand the commercial aspects of a record company or the need for a contract to protect both themselves and the record company."

The stalemate could have lasted indefinitely if Bad Brains had not learned that in the late '60s Cooper had worked for the government of Ethiopia establishing a national mint, working directly with Rasta icon Hailie Selassie himself. At first, HR and company didn't believe it, but Cooper showed them letters as well as medallions he had with the likeness of Selassie on them. "Bad Brains just flipped," Cooper says. "They said, 'We want to be on your label!' One of the stipulations of the contract was that I give them each one of the coins to hang around their neck," said Neal. "I think they were more excited about the medallions than being on ROIR." Cooper set to work on "Bad Brains," the tape that would be the band's first national release.

Centered on Lower East Side venues like 171-A and A7, a New York City hardcore scene began to grow. New bands like the Beastie Boys, Reagan Youth, Cro Mags, Kraut, Heart Attack, the Mob, and the Nihilistics joined existing ones like the Mad, the Stimulators, False Prophets, and Even Worse (which included Jack Rabid). As in Washington, Bad Brains were the catalyst for a punk eruption.

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Henry Garfield was feeling desperate when he went to New York in June for a show at Studio 57 with Bad Brains, Black Flag, and LA's UX. "Looking at 20 with just a high school education didn't look good," he says. "I knew I could be doing this—working at Haagen Daaz, living in an apartment smelling of insecticide and dirty socks—for rest of my life. Everything was closing in on me."

Garfield jumped up and sang "12XU" with HR and danced and sang along with abandon to Black Flag. He followed the latter band to A7, where it played an impromptu show long past midnight. By the time Black Flag hit the stage, Garfield needed to get back to Georgetown to open the Haagen Daaz shop. Several songs into the band's set, he requested "Clocked In" to send him on his way. On an impulse, he jumped onstage and sang with the band. Then he drove back to DC, arriving just in time to go to work.

Days later, Garfield got a call from Black Flag vocalist Dez Cadena. He'd decided to play second guitar and the group wanted Garfield to try out as singer. "This band was as big as Elvis in my mind," Garfield says. "What else could I do? So I just went and did it. I'd never have a chance like that again in my life." When practices in New York went well, Garfield was officially asked to join.

Garfield returned home and began making preparations to leave for good. Before he left, SOA still had one

more gig: a show with Black Flag at a club in the working-class Philadelphia neighborhood of Kensington. The Georgetown punks went with the same attitude as they had taken to New York. "We really didn't come up to beat up Philly punks, but I guess we came up to fight for something," Garfield allows. "It was sorta to show people what was going on in DC."

They had chosen the wrong place for the demonstration. When the dancing got rough during Black Flag's set, one of the locals took offense and a fight ensued. After the immediate mass response of the DC crew, the locals ran from the club, chased by the DC kids. Fighting indoors on a dance floor controlled by the DC crew was one thing; fighting outside on the local turf was another matter entirely. Suddenly the visiting punks faced not just a few local kids but a whole neighborhood.

Stabb was inside when a comrade came back with blood streaming down his face. "Police had lined up blocking the street and just watched it all," he recalls. "More fights erupted and out of the woodwork came the local gang—Kensington Boys with baseball bats!" One of the DC contingent, Jamie Biddle, was struck in the head with a bat. "We were standing about 10 feet away and couldn't do anything," says Stabb. "We were frozen with shock. We grabbed Jamie and took off to the nearest emergency center. By the time we got there, we were covered with blood. Jamie ended up with 22 stitches." Fortunately, no one was killed or permanently injured in the confrontation.

The sight of police watching the mayhem without intervening inspired Stabb to write "No Rights," a song that would appear on the GI's first EP, *Legless Bull*, Dischord's fourth release.

In retrospect, Garfield would feel that the Philadelphia battle had a message: He had gotten out just in time. Defecting from Washington, he decided to leave something behind: the name of the father he hated. Henry Garfield became Henry Rollins, taking his new surname from a college T-shirt worn by MacKaye's sister.

The musicians who recorded for Black Flag's label, SST, became the renamed singer his new extended family. "Our practices were our world. We hung out with the Minutemen, Saccharine Trust—crazy people wired out on music, just like us. Black Flag was a big gang, music was what was happening."

Rollins was less sanguine about what was then America's largest hardcore punk scene. "The LA punk community was jaded people into it for the wrong reasons," he says. "It was not my pure energy trip. Drugs were all around, kids on quaaludes, 15 year old girls, high school dropouts, shooting smack, fucking anyone who came along."

Shortly after returning to L.A. with its new vocalist, Black Flag recorded its first album, *Damaged*. The record was a hardcore landmark, but it didn't make a fan of MCA boss Al Bergamo, whose company was supposed to distribute it. After listening to the album, Bergamo cancelled MCA's distribution deal with Unicorn, SST's sub-distributor. Black Flag was left with 20,000 copies of its already completed LP, all bearing the MCA logo. The band covered the MCA logo on each album with stickers bearing Bergamo's verdict: "As a parent, I found it to be an anti-parent record."

The incident was just the beginning of Black Flag's distrib-

ution problems, but for Rollins the important thing was that the album was out and the group could return to the road. As the fierce, even intimidating presence fronting hardcore's hardest touring band, he had found a reason to live.

"You see the Clash on stage and they're all high on some kind of speed. If I want some energy, I just drink some orange juice and go out and rock harder than all of them."

—Daryl Jenifer

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Bad Brains' relocation and Garfield/Rollins's farewell left large holes in DC's hardcore scene. The older punk scene was also sputtering, with the demise of the Nurses (who split upon Halpern's death), the Razz (because of strife between Michael Reidy and Tommy Keene), and the Urban Verbs, who didn't last long after Warner Bros. dropped them. The Slickee Boys soldiered on, joined by such promising new bands as the Velvet Monkeys (whose leader, Don Fleming, would ultimately make his name as a producer) and REM (soon to become Egoslavia to avoid conflict with a band from Athens, Georgia). But increasingly Washington was known for hardcore, which some locals were now spelling "harDCore." And the focus of harDCore was Minor Threat.

Minor Threat's music caught up with its nationwide buzz with the release of Dischord #3, Minor Threat's first single. Like the Teen Idles and SOA EP's, it had been recorded with Don Zientara at his basement studio, now known as Inner Ear. On the label was the motto, "Putting DC on the Map," a joke that nonetheless revealed the band's self-confidence.

The music's velocity made an immediate impression, but the eight songs also had cogent lyrics, catchy melodies, impassioned vocals, and tight, precise, performances. It was a veritable blueprint for "thrash," a sound that would launch thousands of imitations.

The songs raged, but not blindly or inarticulately. Each one was simple, yet well-spoken, taken straight from actual experience. "I Don't Wanna Hear It" and "Screaming at a Wall" were inspired by the disdain of the press and the older punks. "Bottled Violence" was an anti-alcohol and -violence rant rooted in the misadventures of Black Market Baby's Paul Cleary. "Seeing Red," the only song written by Nelson, was about being judged simply on appearances.

At the time, no one could have guessed that "Straight Edge" would be the most influential of the EP's tracks. For MacKaye it was—and would remain—simply a song, not a philosophy or movement, but for others it would take on a broad and lasting significance.

The band made plans for a national tour with Youth Brigade, and played a show at the 9:30 Club with the GIs (now being called Government Issue) to raise money for the excursion. In the audience was Cynthia Connolly, a recent transplant from LA who would soon begin writing D.C. scene reports for LA-based *Flipside* under the name Morticia.

Also there were Tesco Vee and Dave Stimson, publishers of *Touch And Go*, which was known for its taste for the tasteless. Vee, who put his critical outlook into practice with the taboo-tweaking Meatmen, had been a fan of DC hardcore punk from afar, and

experiencing the music live completed his conversion. He and

Stimson began to not only tout the scene in their fanzine but also to make plans to move to DC.

A harDCore mythology was beginning to develop, with phrases like "straightedge" intriguing—and in some cases inspiring—kids in punk scenes across the country. The scene's most visible symbol was the "X" on the hand, which was included somewhere in the packaging of each Dischord release. Once a practical solution to the problem of underage shows, (the DC punks had picked it up at the Teen Idles' San Francisco show, when they had their hands marked with an X to prevent them from ordering at the bar) it was now becoming an identifying mark for a growing teenage tribe. Some punks, including Woodlawn student Amy Pickering, wore it in school.

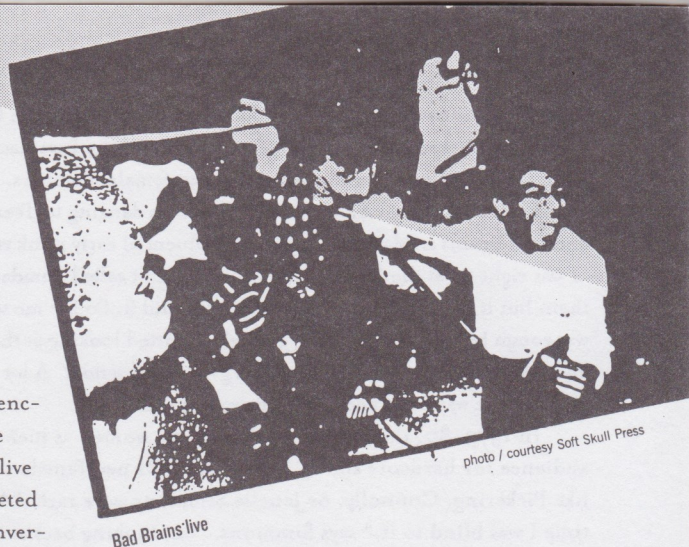
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Pickering was one of harDCore's most devoted fans, but she and other young women began to feel excluded—by force. At hardcore shows, slamdancing and stagediving were separating the boys from the girls.

In the *Washington Post*, Richard Harrington depicted slamdancing in prose that, if somewhat breathless, had the ring of unwelcome truth: "The pit is ferocious and frightening: Young men's bodies slam into each other, arms and elbows out, fists flailing, like razor-edged Mexican jumping beans popping madly on the dance floor. This ritual of resistance is fueled by dancers who are young, white teenage boys given to shaved heads more extreme than a Marine cut, sometimes in a 'Taxi Driver' mohawk. DC's punks are given to torn shirts and jeans, black leather jackets littered with names of bands and ideology. Their dancing feet are enveloped by combat boots, the heels that wound. Years ago Iggy Stooze used to damage himself in performance, throwing himself on broken glass or into the audience. Now the audience completes the cycle."

"It's not about hurting anybody," the article quoted Henry not-yet-Rollins. "It's just letting go, just going off. A lot of kids live in good places, their parents are rich. That doesn't keep you from being mad or feeling angry or outraged or alienated."

By mid-1981, punks' "letting-go" had effectively barred women from both the dance floor and the stage. The dozen bands who played the first massive Wilson Center show included only one woman: Toni Young, bassist of Red C. This was particularly striking



Bad Brains' live

photo / courtesy Soft Skull Press

since so many of the earlier local punk bands, including the Urban Verbs, the Slickee Boys, the Nurses, Tru Fax and the Insaniacs, Tiny Desk Unit, D.Ceats, and the Shirkers, had female members.

Early scenemaker Sharon Cheslow recalls dancing to Teen Idles and Bad Brains at Madams Organ, an influential early punk venue. "I was right up at the front of the stage. It wasn't called slamdancing then, but it was very physical. I could withstand it. So for me to say it was rough by 1981, you know it's rough. I started looking at the scene and asking myself, 'Am I really with a group of friends?' A lot of the girls felt the way I did and started dropping out."

In 1979-80, there were nearly as many women as men in the audience for hardcore shows, but by late 1981 new female converts like Pickering, Connolly, or Janelle Simmons were rare. "At the time I was blind to it," says Simmons, "but looking back now women didn't really have a place."

"I wasn't into slamdancing," recalls Anne Bonafede, another longtime punk fan. "It was too male oriented. Around Minor Threat and SOA, I started feeling really alienated from the scene. I used to love to go out to shows and dance but by then you couldn't really because you might get hurt seriously."

The women who did continue attending hardcore shows had to do so on the terms set by their male peers. "We were trying to be boys," says Pickering.

Cheslow and Bonafede formed Chalk Circle, the first all-female band to emerge from harDCore. "At the time my life was lived through boyfriends or guys that I knew rather than for myself," Bonafede says. "With the beginning of Chalk Circle, that really changed. I could be a drummer if I wanted to be. All my [male] friends had been playing in bands, so I knew I could just do it, that was the punk philosophy. It tied very much into my feminist growth as well, just being able to say that I don't have to live through guys, I can do it myself. Chalk Circle helped me deal with all the alienation I was feeling from the hardcore scene at the time."

Like *Scream*, Chalk Circle initially was not accepted by the scene that had inspired it. After the group played its first show—with REM and Velvet Monkeys rather than any hardcore bands—a *Critical List* review called the show "bimbo nite at dc space" and dismissed Chalk Circle as a "boring all-girl band."

"It was very unusual to have an all-female band," says Bonafede.

"That definitely had a lot to do with us not being taken seriously. There were lot of bad all-male bands at the time and they wouldn't have been trashed as much as Chalk Circle."

Male supremacy wasn't harDCore's only dubious new element. A young band called Iron Cross became the earliest local group to emulate Britain's violent and sometimes racist skinhead scene. Frontman Sab Grey had lived in the UK and returned home inspired to form the first American skinhead band. He was joined by 13-year-old guitarist Mark Haggerty, 14-year-old drummer Dante Ferrando (both from the now-defunct Outsiders), and 15-year-old bassist Wendell Blow (fresh from SOA). Theirs was a slower, English-oriented punk style that rejected speedy DC hardcore.

Interviewed for *Touch & Go*, Grey made some remarks that were more controversial than his boredom with "the fast shit." The singer found himself defending members of Britain's far-right National Front. "Sure they are Nazis to a certain extent," he said. "I'm a Nazi, everyone is." When challenged, Grey added that "blacks are the biggest racists."

The singer's ill-considered words had lasting repercussions for him and his band. Interviewed years later, Grey recalled sadly, "I was just talking out of my ass. I had no real idea that people all over the country would be reading what I said. Who in the scene did at the time? We were just dumb kids."

Although it surely doesn't justify the ignorance of Grey's comments, there is a certain ring of truth to his explanation. Over the course of the last year, something had happened: With only the slightest warning, DC was becoming one of the most closely observed and influential punk scenes in the United States. As Alec MacKaye recalled "When we started out, we never believed in our wildest dreams that what we were doing in DC would matter to somebody outside the Beltway." Now clearly it did. But while DC as a scene would rise even further, the specter of racism and fascism would follow Iron Cross until its end.

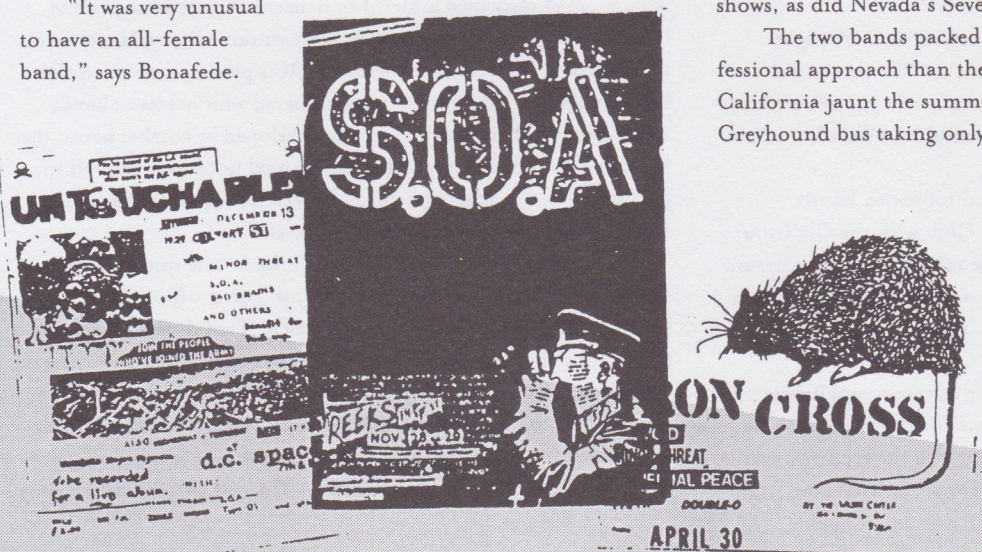
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The Minor Threat/Youth Brigade tour began in August, with 10 dates between Chicago and the final scheduled gigs in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Biafra helped the bands arrange shows, as did Nevada's Seven Seconds and Ohio's Necros.

The two bands packed their equipment in a van, a more professional approach than the Teen Idles had taken on their California jaunt the summer before, where they rode the Greyhound bus taking only drumsticks and guitars. But the plan

"When we started out, we never believed in our wildest dreams that what we were doing in DC would matter to somebody outside the Beltway."

—Alec MacKaye



had one flaw: The van belonged to the mother of Youth Brigade guitarist Tom Clinton, who was never informed of the scheme. When she learned that her van was in the Midwest and on its way to the West Coast, she demanded its immediate return.

The musicians had no choice but to return to DC with less than half their planned dates completed, scrapping entirely the important West Coast gigs. For Lyle Preslar, the bungled tour was the final indignity. He had been accepted at Northwestern University and saw little reason to remain with Minor Threat, whose frequent internal squabbles wearied him.

Without Preslar, Minor Threat would not continue. MacKaye and Nelson began to work with former Untouchables guitarist Eddie Janney and John Falls, who was then known primarily for his daredevil stage dives. The new band was to be called either Skewbald (MacKaye's idea) or Grand Union (Nelson's).

"Jeff and I have a policy, we don't keep the bands alive. The members are the bands," MacKaye explained at the time. "It's kind of cool to break up, rebuild, and write a whole new set of songs. It humbles you, you never get too good, and you stay underground. In DC, right at the point when people start hearing about your band or you put out a record, the band breaks up. It keeps it really underground, gives room for a lot of progression."

Before the split, Minor Threat recorded its second EP, *In My Eyes*. The sessions were done at Inner Ear, and Skip Groff again helped pay for the recording. The record was a major advance, rivaling the power of the band's former inspiration, Bad Brains.

"Out of Step" was both the EP's most influential and controversial song. "Don't smoke/Don't drink/don't fuck/at least I can fucking think," proclaimed MacKaye. Jeff Nelson didn't like the lyrics because it seemed that MacKaye was ordering people not to drink, smoke, or fuck. That this was a personal code of conduct rather than a set of instructions was obvious to MacKaye, but not to Nelson.

Interviewed by *Flipside*, Nelson carefully noted that "Ian and I agree on almost everything, but he and I do think differently on some things. If it was his way, the whole scene wouldn't drink or smoke ever. But it's not like that, there's more and more drinking just 'cause the kids that were there are two years older now and they can drink, they're of age. I agree with Ian on all of his [anti-drug] views, it's just what I actually do." Although he didn't publicly advocate either activity, Nelson did sometimes drink or smoke pot.

After a final few Minor Threat gigs, Preslar left for school and Baker joined Government Issue. Red C split as frontman Tomas Squip headed to college, and within two months Youth Brigade also called it quits. When Skewbald didn't develop as hoped, MacKaye headed to Britain as a roadie on Black Flag's first UK tour (he raised the money for his plane ticket by passing a cup at a DC Black Flag show). To the American punks' surprise, such British counterparts as the Exploited and Chelsea treated them with disdain.

The opening left by the defunct groups was filled by new teen punk bands, notably Artificial Peace, Faith, and Deadline. The former was a thrash band that included former members of Red C and Assault and Battery: singer Steve Polcari, bassist Rob Moss,

drummer

Mike Manos, and

guitarist Pete Murray. The

musicians hailed from Bethesda, an

affluent Maryland suburb just a few miles up

Wisconsin Avenue from Wilson High School. The

Bethesda crew's dancers were known as the "B-Town

Thrashers," but one of Artificial Peace's early songs had another name for their town: "Wasteland."

Faith marked Alec MacKaye's return to action after a series of bands which never quite escaped the basement. Initially, Garfield had tried to recruit the younger MacKaye to replace him in SOA, but MacKaye didn't want to sing Garfield's words. Instead, he began working with SOA's guitarist and drummer, Mike Hampton and Ivor Hanson; they were joined by bassist Chris Bald, a Wilson dropout. He and MacKaye quickly found a creative connection, with Bald writing many of the lyrics MacKaye would sing.

Faith debuted in November at Woodlawn, and soon had a reputation for intense, confrontational performances. The quartet always opened its set with the rampaging "It's Time," which was built on a relentless bass line. The song's refrain expressed the adolescent rage characteristic of hardCore—"I know what I want and I take what I need/I'm gonna make this society bleed"—but the band's music also presaged the raw emotion and almost spiritual striving that would distinguish later Dischord bands.

Formed from several basement outfits, Deadline comprised singer Ray Hare, guitarist Chris Carron, bassist Terry Scanlon, and drummer Brendan Canty. Almost as important to the band's hijinks were their pals Guy Picciotto, Mike Fellows, and Chris Bald. One chaotic night, the group of friends jokingly named itself "DOD" for "Dance Of Death." Although it was just one of many running jokes, DOD stuck. "It was one of those little things that has an esoteric non-meaning that just happens to mean everything," recalls Picciotto.

The DOD crew built a special bond with Faith and Deadline. The Dance of Death, which involved playfully crawling under the legs of humorless slamdancers, was performed at Faith shows. "Every fucking show they all shave their heads, they write DOD on their heads, they're berserk," marveled Ian MacKaye at the time. "The last night Faith played, these kids put their jackets up around their heads and zipped them up tight. They just fucking ran out [onstage], couldn't see anything, fucking ran out smashing. At the UK Subs show, this kid did a back flip off the stage, smashed his fucking head, and knocked himself out. I picked him up and carried him outside. He was back on the floor in like two minutes!"

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HardCore's reputation grew as Dischord continued to release ferocious, committed music. By the end of the year, the label had issued seven singles (including one by Ohio's Necros that was a joint release with Touch and Go). Next up was a compilation album originally titled *Hardcore* but eventually released as *Flex Your Head*. "I'm not too much into the whole 'hardcore' thing now," MacKaye

noted at the time. "It becomes a selling point now, you see albums saying 'hardcore' on them and I'm not into that. I consider myself a punk but a punk on my own terms, nobody else's."

The album included songs by many bygone groups, including Teen Idles, Untouchables, Minor Threat, Youth Brigade, SOA, and Red C, but also offered evidence of the scene's continuing vitality with tracks by established bands like GI, Void, and Iron Cross as well as such new ones as Deadline and Artificial Peace. Similar compilations would soon document the hardcore scenes in Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York.

If MacKaye and Nelson didn't always agree on Minor Threat's drug policy, they were allies in running Dischord. But their third partner in the label, Nathan Strejcek, began to feel that he was being ignored. After Strejcek left 400 copies of *Minor Disturbance* atop a hot motor in a van, thus making the Teen Idles single more of a collectors item than expected, MacKaye and Nelson began to make Dischord decisions on their own.

The gap widened when MacKaye and Nelson found a house to share in the Clarendon area of Arlington. It was ramshackle but cheap and close to a Metrorail station and right across the street from a 7-11. The house became Dischord headquarters, which put the label's operations even further from Strejcek. He became angry when he learned that Dischord had planned a GI release without consulting him, and angrier when saw a Dischord ad mentioning a "possible EP by Youth Brigade." Stung that his own band's release was considered only a possibility, Strejcek titled the Youth Brigade record *Possible EP*.

Strejcek began to withdraw, not only from Dischord but from hardcore as well. When Youth Brigade broke up, Strejcek began a new group with his girlfriend, ex-Chalk Circle member Jan Pumpreys. But their planned band didn't appear, and Strejcek never returned to the scene. MacKaye and Nelson's world shifted to Dischord House, and hanging out in Georgetown became less important. The tight-knit teen punk clan was beginning to grow up and apart. Soon the larger hardcore community would too, caught on the horns of its own contradictions.

Part Two: I Against I

Ian MacKaye couldn't get the phone conversation out of his head. He had been talking to HR, now on Bad Brains' first US tour, when HR had brought up the subject of Minor Threat. "HR said, 'A lot of people are asking about you guys, you should get back together,'" MacKaye would recall later. "I said forget it. Then he said, 'You don't understand, you came on with this really strong message, a whole philosophy, then you left everyone hanging. You've left a lot unsaid.'"

Like Bad Brains, Minor Threat had been a band with a mission, at

least for its lead singer. So he took it seriously when HR—who, for all their disagreements on specifics, had been one of MacKaye's main inspirations—said so strongly that he considered the band's purpose unfulfilled.

MacKaye had regrets of his own about Minor Threat's split. He had not left the band, Lyle Preslar had. And the effectiveness of the group as a vehicle for MacKaye's message was becoming clear, as Skewbald spun its wheels. Both HR's remarks and the rave reviews that greeted the posthumous *In My Eyes* EP indicated that Minor Threat had spoken deeply to an audience far beyond Washington. The only course MacKaye could see was to press forward with his sputtering new project, yet he knew that Minor Threat's kind of chemistry would not easily be recaptured.

Preslar himself also concluded that the band's breakup was a mistake. The most pragmatic and careerist of the four members, Preslar had left Minor Threat because it didn't appear to be going anywhere. Yet life at Northwestern seemed just as fruitless. As it became clear that Minor Threat was developing a national audience, Preslar, in his own words, "dropped out of school with the express intent of reforming Minor Threat."

The first person he approached was Brian Baker, who turned out to be just as dissatisfied with GI as Preslar was with Northwestern. Going from the pre-eminent hardCore band to a second-string one, Baker would later admit, had delivered an unexpected jolt to his ego.

John Stabb was simply not Baker's idea of a frontman. The singer had taken to wearing increasingly obnoxious clothes—"If it was irritating to the eye, I wore it!" he later bragged—and engaging in the antics that had earned him the nickname of "BoBo the Clown." Baker was embarrassed at a February 9:30 Club show with the Necros and the Misfits, when one of the latter asked him how he felt about playing behind Stabb, who that night was wearing a lime green leisure suit. It was easy for Preslar to convince Baker of the wisdom of reforming Minor Threat.

Preslar and Baker didn't expect Nelson to resist, but they were dubious about MacKaye. They didn't know he was also open to a reunion, albeit for reasons unlike those of the other members. When gingerly approached, MacKaye readily signed on. The band members would later repeatedly explain that Minor Threat—in Preslar's words—"broke up because I went away to college and we got back together because I came back from college, that's all, simple." But it really wasn't that simple. The motives of the different members were quite distinct, and over time the differences would become increasingly clear and troublesome.

Still, at first, the reunion seemed uncomplicated. The band had, after all, been apart only from September 1981 to April 1982. It was merely a case of the musicians realizing an error and picking up where they had left off. The first priority was to get out and play, not just in DC, but across the country.

Baker was still only a high school junior, so he had to make arrangements with his parents and school. That accomplished, he sold his 1966 Mustang so the band could buy a van. They planned two local dates—one with Bad Brains at 9:30, the other a Malcolm Riviera-organized show at Wilson Center with hardCore allies

Faith, Void,
Artificial Peace,
Iron Cross, and
Double O—fol-
lowed by a full US
tour.

Minor

Threat's decision

had a major impact on the DC scene. When Preslar later said, "it wasn't a popular decision with my parents," MacKaye wryly noted that "it wasn't a popular decision with anybody."

Many younger fans were elated by the prospect of a resurrected Minor Threat, but dismayed, cynical mutterings were heard from harDCore veterans. Many apparently shared Chris Bald's judgment that "Minor Threat was a band that made more sense apart than together." It was well known that the musicians had frequently been at odds with each other. Some people who admired MacKaye's integrity nonetheless distrusted Baker and Preslar's motives. Others were simply envious of Minor Threat's stature.

There was nothing about that Wilson Center show that suggested that Minor Threat had lost its commitment to harDCore principles: Admission cost three dollars, there was no age limit, and no bouncers. The band even played before Faith and Artificial Peace, hardly the sign of superstar egos (the reason was that MacKaye still worked at Georgetown Theater; he needed to go back and lock up for the night).

Given Minor Threat's popularity, it wasn't surprising that many audience members left right after the band's set. Though it was not encouraged by the band, the exodus suggested to such observers as Sharon Cheslow—who wrote about the night in a new fanzine, *If This Goes On*—that Minor Threat had become just another entertainment option rather than part of a community that supported all its bands out of principle.

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By this time, straightedge was no longer solely a DC phenomenon. It had reinforced the outlook of Nevada's Seven Seconds camp, and transformed the growing group of people centered around the Boston band Society System Decontrol, known more simply as SSD. The band's founder, Al Barile, was particularly influenced by the power of Bad Brains and a discussion with Henry Rollins. "He told me how united and tight the DC scene was. I realized Boston didn't have anything like that." Barile stopped drinking, took up the "X", and the all-ages crusade. SSD rapidly became the biggest East Coast hardcore band aside from Bad Brains or Minor Threat.

SSD's agenda, as expressed in the song "Ex Claim," could have been cribbed from an unwritten harDCore handbook: ruling the dance floor, hatred for New York, no barriers between performer and audience, all-ages shows, no drugs, scene unity, and a DIY ethic. Although Dischord remained adamant about releasing the music only of local bands, MacKaye and Nelson helped SSD put out *The Kids Will Have Their Say* on the new Ex Claim label—just as they had helped the Necros launch Touch and Go.

Minor Threat's decision to reform and tour had a major impact on the DC scene. When Preslar later said, "it wasn't a popular decision with my parents," MacKaye wryly noted that "it wasn't a popular decision with anybody."

SSD's

first visit to DC showed that some of harDCore's character had been lost in the translation. While

Washington had its share of tough-guy posturing, the fans that accompanied SSD to Woodlawn High School took their slam-dancing much more seriously than their DC counterparts.

The DOD crew was already part of DC folklore, and the Boston kids were apparently expecting to see an army of fierce rumblers. They were taken aback to discover that Picciotto, Fellows, and their friends, for all their abandon, were more nerds than bruisers, with a style that subverted the rituals of slamming. Their creative, more-fun-than-fury dancing starkly contrasted that of the Boston crowd, who treated slamming as a contact sport combining tackle football and outright assault.

"The first time SSD came down with their boys," Alec MacKaye said, "they wanted to prove to DC that they were rough and tough. Nobody really danced or anything. These guys were all mad. So while the other bands were playing, there were two guys—they had long hair—who were kind of pogoing. So all the Boston guys got out there and did all this thrashing around. And then they hit the guy and the guy kinda hit them back. Then all of a sudden they all turned around and jumped on him—just jumped up and down on him and broke all his ribs. I couldn't believe it, it was the stupidest and sickest thing I ever saw."

Sab Grey, however, endorsed the Bostonians' savage style in his new fanzine, *Skin Flint*: "What's the matter with DC lately? No dancing, no band support, just sideline soap operas and complaining about the 'dancing being too rough' from the snotty brats who came in with punk over the summer. I'm not saying we should all be musclebound goons who fight everyone in sight, but if you wish to 'prove your individuality' you must be prepared to fight for it!" As these words suggest, the Boston approach simply took the old DC credo—on display in NYC and Philadelphia the year before—one step further.

Ian MacKaye was also worried about the harDCore scene, but for different reasons. "I've seen Washington grow from the Teen Idles, Untouchables, and Henry—those nine people, that was it, that was our 'hardcore scene,' he told *Forced Exposure* in March. "I don't believe in 'slamdancing.' I'm sorry, I hate that fucking word. I hate when people start a trend with it," he said, showing the same skepticism he now felt towards "hardcore."

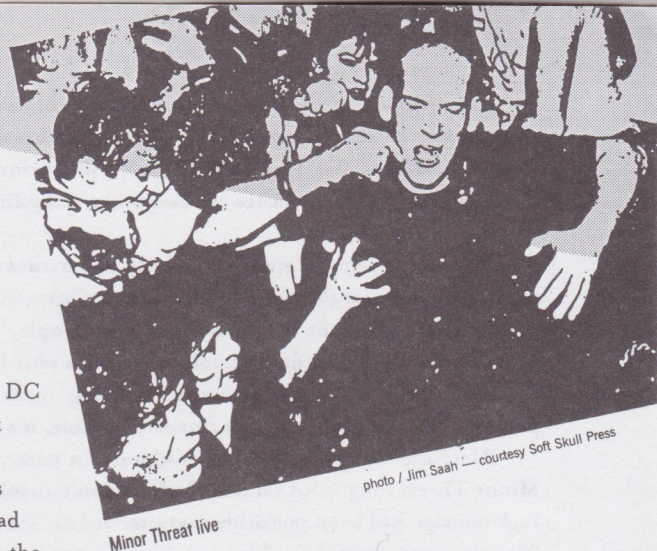


photo / Jim Saah — courtesy Soft Skull Press

Minor Threat live

MacKaye was particularly annoyed that Boston record and comics store Newbury Comics—which he felt had brushed him off when he tried to sell it Teen Idles EPs just a year before—had suddenly jumped on the hardcore bandwagon by compiling its own compilation, *Boston, Not LA*.

"When suddenly people start putting out 'hardcore' compilations, realizing that the word 'hardcore' is so financially viable, then it's time to get the fuck away from those people," he said. "Why don't people just do it themselves? That's what Dischord is. Put it out, man, be proud of what you're doing, make it your project. That way, when it's not financially viable, it's still yours."

MacKaye was regularly asked to address the controversial Minor Threat song "Out Of Step," whose don't-drink-smoke-fuck message had been puckishly characterized as "monk rock": "Sex is a great, great thing," he said. "I am not anti-sex, I am anti-fucking, if you can understand the distinction. All this 'adolescent sexual discovery' crap is twisted. You watch TV shows, everyone's getting laid all the time, no one gets pregnant or VD. [Yet] when kids [have casual sex], they get burned. If people want to sit around and go, 'Oh, he's a fucking monk,' then they've got their own problems."

In one 60-second song, the avowedly anti-religion, anti-authority, anti-establishment punk had challenged the entirety of the hedonist mantra, "sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll." The outraged and often willfully distorted interpretations of the song suggested that people were threatened by MacKaye's critique. To him, that showed the accuracy of his aim.

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Before going out on tour, Bad Brains had released their ROIR cassette. Finally, many of their best songs—most at least two years old—would be available, in raw recordings engineered by Jerry Williams at 171-A that captured the band at its best. Lest anyone miss the drift of the lyrics, the cover graphic showed a lightning bolt erupting from the heavens to shatter the US Capitol dome.

The cassette was—in the words of guitarist Dr. Know—"crucial music for crucial times" and would become ROIR's top seller, with almost 150,000 sold in its first 10 years. The cassette expanded the band's reputation nationally and even internationally. A flattering feature in British weekly *Sounds* called Bad Brains "one of the true miracles to have emerged from punk rock."

The article included apocalyptic pronouncements from HR and Daryl Jenifer. Alarmed by Reagan's hostile rhetoric and unprecedented arms build-up, the Bulletin Of

"When suddenly people start putting out 'hardcore' compilations, realizing that the word 'hardcore' is so financially viable, then it's time to get the fuck away from those people," —Ian MacKaye

Atomic Scientists had shifted the hands on its Doomsday Clock to just four minutes to midnight, the moment that symbolized nuclear war. To Bad Brains, it was the Armageddon Time that the book of Revelation foretold. "We don't have time for joking, man, these are serious times," said HR. "The world could end at any time. It's a matter of consciousness, making sure that when the time does come you'll be prepared." Added Jenifer: "Our music is reflection of the times. It's like sticking your hand in a microwave and out comes your hand, all charred."

True to their original credo of PMA (Positive Mental Attitude), however, Bad Brains still had hope to share. "Our music is a way of revealing the revolutionary," Dr. Know told *Sounds*. HR added that "Money don't mean a thing to u—that don't make it. Who got the highest number on the charts—that doesn't make it no more. It's going to be rough and it's going to be hard and the one thing we don't have is money, but we've got unity. We're setting an example for the youth. The youths don't want to be part of [Babylon] and we don't want to be part of it. If we have to die fighting, we will."

Such words might seem grandiose, but Bad Brains had inspired hardcore bands all along the East Coast. And the band was hoping to further the cause of national punk unity with a double-LP compilation of bands like DC's *Scream*, *Skewbald*, *Peer Pressure*, and *Double O*, Chicago's *Articles Of Faith*, and Florida's *Crucial Truth*.

The musicians took the tapes with them on tour, planning to complete the record in California, where they also were to work on some 171-A tapes intended for the second Bad Brains album. As the musicians hit the road, with Jerry Williams doing sound and a Rasta "I-tal" cook, they were at the height of their powers and certain of the absolute necessity of their mission. Tragically, their behavior on the tour would throw all that into doubt.

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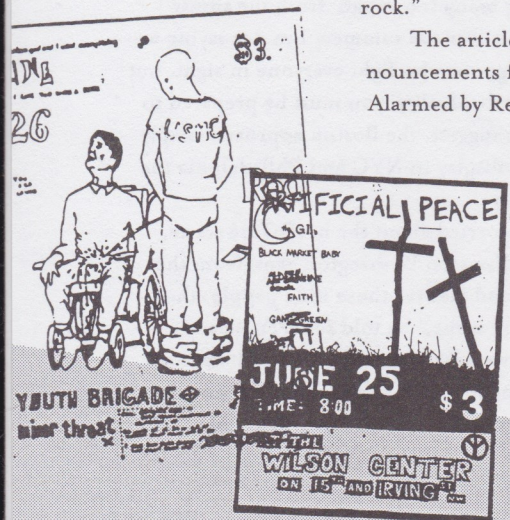
In *Sounds*, Tim Sommer had commended Bad Brains' "very active but unobtrusive religiousness [that] fuels every positive and visible thing that they do." Not every aspect of the band's spirituality, however, was positive.

While HR often spoke of being on the side of the poor and the oppressed, asking, "Who is more revolutionary than Jesus Christ?," he had little affection for some outcasts. Like many religions based in the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures, Rastafarianism viewed gay and lesbian sexuality as an "abomination." After moving to New York, old friends recall that HR and Earl would make remarks like "fire and brimstone, Babylon" when encountering gays on the street in Greenwich Village.

HR was not one to do things halfway. As with PMA and punk before, he had seized Rasta with mighty fervor. Part of the

singer's power was that he truly seemed to lose himself in his expression. This was riveting to behold—"HR is as close to a true shaman as punk has produced," Jello Biafra once said—but his intense drive and absolute belief could lead to fanaticism.

HR began to use the name Ras



Hailu Gabriel Joseph I. Apparently convinced that he was a prophet with God-given powers, he tried to exorcise friends who had drug problems. He began to look for 12 wives in emulation of the Biblical King Solomon, and to view people like Jerry Williams—who, although white, had adopted Rasta ways—as his disciples.

HR told one interviewer that "capitalists try to instill fear into people, [but] we don't have to be afraid anymore, we've got Jah to protect us." When the journalist professed not to understand, HR said "That's why I'm here to help you." Annoyed, the interviewer responded, "I don't think I need help." Replied HR: "That's why I'm here to help you."

That kind of messianic condescension was bound to rankle. HR's beliefs had nurtured his vision of spiritual growth, unity, and revolution, but such anecdotes suggest he was swinging out of balance.

When Bad Brains hit the road in March, there was no sign of the coming explosion. In San Francisco, the band played before more than a thousand people, their biggest headlining show yet.

In 1992, Biafra still spoke of that night with awe: "It was one of the best shows I've ever seen any band play. There was so much positive energy burning off the stage that some of the worst thugs in San Francisco—including, Bob Noxious, infamous leader of the Fuck-Ups who sometimes wore a shirt with swastikas on the front and "Niggers Beware" on the back—were actually dancing with their arm around a black person. They seemed to have the effect of easing a lot of the tension that had been building up in San Francisco. There was a serious racist thug element starting to grow in the scene and some of that really dissipated after the Bad Brains [played]. They had an incredible force to unite so many people."

That wasn't so clear after the show, when Williams took the band to stay with a friend who lived in the Castro, perhaps the world's best-known gay neighborhood. Flushed with Rasta fervor and a sense of triumph after the show, the band was outraged to encounter transvestites, male prostitutes, and men kissing other men in public. The band fled to another apartment in a different area.

The next day, the band was off to LA for their next gig and an interview with the popular punk fanzine *Flipside*. Asked how the band had liked San Francisco, HR announced that the city had "too many faggots. Mostly if they acted sensible it wouldn't be so bad. Most of them act so crazy even out in public, it disturbs me, makes me want to go and shoot one of them." This was a remarkable digression from Bad Brains' message of positivity and revolution. And it was just the beginning.

As Bad Brains toured California, they linked up with MDC (Millions of Dead Cops), a militant band that had recently moved from Texas to San Francisco. Partly because both bands were vegetarian, unusual in punk at the time, they hit it off and planned to tour back to the East Coast together. "They were the greatest band I had ever seen," MDC singer Dave Dictor recalls. "I fell in love."

Bad Brains didn't realize that Dictor was a cross-dresser who sang lyrics like "Cops don't like us fags and punks who don't conform." For MDC, it was obvious that gays and punks were fellow

outcasts who should make common cause. Bad Brains, however, now took the Bible as the final authority on homosexuality as with virtually everything else.

Ultimately, HR and Dictor had a tense encounter. "MDC came to us and wanted us to read their lyrics," HR recalls. "They kept saying how gays didn't have any say, that everybody was persecuting gays. I-mon sat down with [Dictor] and had a long talk about fornication and that homosexuality was Babylon. He said that I was hypocrite because I say I deal with unity but I don't want to unite with the faggots and it got real serious."

Without resolving the dispute, Bad Brains set off for Texas, with MDC to follow. In Austin, Bad Brains were set to spend the night at the home of Big Boys' guitarist Tim Kerr. MDC called ahead to warn the gay-friendly Austin punk scene of Bad Brains' views, but the easygoing Kerr didn't worry.

The Bad Brains/Big Boys show went well, and Big Boys singer Randy "Biscuits" Turner even bought some pot for the visiting band. After the show, Biscuits and HR embraced warmly, Kerr recalled, "like two new friends." What happened during the embrace is a matter of dispute. HR has said that Biscuits made a pass at him. Other witnesses suggest that Biscuits made a remark that HR "interpreted" as a pass at him. According to Kerr, Biscuits simply made an innocuous remark indicating that he was gay.

"Immediately HR pulled back and said something like, 'But you're not gay, are you?'," Kerr remembered. When the puzzled Biscuits nodded, HR was shocked. "All I remember is HR spinning around screaming 'Babylon bloodclot faggot!'" at Biscuits, Kerr said.

Kerr nonetheless let Bad Brains stay the night, heading off to work early the next morning. Several hours later, his wife called, hysterical. She was so upset that Kerr couldn't understand what she was saying, so he raced home. On his front lawn, he found members of MDC and Bad Brains, screaming at each other. After finally silencing the combatants, Kerr ordered MDC to leave. Bad Brains were about to depart anyway. Just before leaving, one of Bad Brains gave Kerr an envelope for Biscuits; Kerr assumed it was the money for the pot purchased the day before.

When Kerr returned home after work, he discovered a few things in his house were not right. A photo collage that happened to include a picture of the Pope—a hated symbol of Babylon to many Rastas—had disappeared. A punk poster that featured a female nude—something of a collector's item, since it had been banned by the city—had been permanently defaced with tape over certain parts of the woman's anatomy.

Kerr had no proof that Bad Brains had done these things,

but he had reason to suspect them. Then, when Biscuits opened the envelope left for him, he discovered that it contained no money. All that was inside was a pile of ashes and a note that read "Burn in hell bloodclot faggot!"

As word of the incident spread, Bad Brains' reputation underwent a dramatic revision. MDC wrote "Pay To Come Along," a song that roasted Bad Brains' "Jah fascist doctrine": "People gave you homes and their love/You gave back hate from high above," Dictor sang. "You hide your eyes from the truth/not to be free, but to be right."

There was disappointment as well as rage in these lyrics. "We'll never know what was lost," sang Dictor, who believed that Bad Brains "could have been the most important band." Biafra admitted his "heartbreak when the homophobic side came out." For many former fans, Bad Brains' message of love and unity would never be credible again.

In an interview later that year, HR conceded that the band had left without paying for the pot they were given by Biscuits, but claimed they did so because the Big Boys "attacked us. They came at us spiritually. After that happened, I-mon felt that I didn't owe them no explanation for nothing. They were my enemies. They got their money though." (According to Kerr, the money didn't arrive until much later—and only after threats of additional bad publicity.) HR also denied that he had "called anybody faggots." Moments later, however, he termed the Big Boys "faggots" to justify not paying Biscuits.

It is important to note that none of the other band members spoke in public with HR's vehemence—or incoherence—about these issues. Interviewed years later, both Darryl Jenifer and Dr. Know expressed their discomfort with HR's rhetoric and actions.

It wasn't simply Bad Brains against Babylon; there were also divisions within the band. Williams sensed internal problems, although the musicians kept them private. At that time, he guessed that some band members had not agreed with HR's treatment of the Big Boys and MDC. Musical direction was also an issue, with HR again pushing for an all-reggae approach.

At an April show in Raleigh, North Carolina, Bad Brains played 12 minutes of punk and 75 minutes of reggae. The youth "need" reggae, HR explained. "They don't have any one showing them the true way." When asked about doing that through rock, HR responded, "I've done that already."

Days later, HR told *Forced Exposure* that Bad Brains were about to become an all-reggae band called Zion Train. This startled the interviewers, but not as much as it surprised the other band members. "All of us are together in it," HR claimed, but Jenifer and Dr. Know had not agreed. Stymied by the band's internal process, HR had decided to commit the group publicly to his preferred course of action.

"HR wanted Bad Brains to become
HR and the Wailers," Jenifer

said later. HR had in fact taken the band's proposed new name from a song on *Uprising*, the last studio album Marley recorded before his death the year before.

Something else was testing band solidarity: HR wanted his friend Ras Freba to be Zion Train's vocalist. Dr. Know didn't mind Freba's singing a number or two, but the guitarist didn't think Freba was qualified to be their frontman. As HR began to hang with Freba more and more, he drifted away from the band, neglecting his previous close relationship with Dr. Know.

Freba had been HR's friend for some time, and the singer's interest in reggae was longstanding. Why then did HR—in the midst of the band's first major tour—suddenly need to make such changes? Apparently the incidents in California and Texas had sparked his desire to exit the world of hardcore. "I guess the final decision was made [when] we went out to California and saw all the faggots and went to Texas," HR told *Forced Exposure*. "There the 'in-thing' was being gay and all the hardcore bands were gay. That was the last straw, I couldn't take no more. Somebody got to go out there and show the youth the truth."

The tour still held one more crisis. When Bad Brains arrived at the 9:30 Club for the show with the re-united Minor Threat, Williams called friends in New York to tell them he was about to return. He was horrified to learn that no rent had been paid on 171-A during the two months he'd been gone. The landlord had evicted Williams, and his recording equipment had been saved only because several friends had scrambled to rescue it.

Williams was furious. He had put up money for the tour himself, with the understanding that Bad Brains would pay his rent with the money they received from their shows. "We just didn't have the money, we needed what we had to get to the next gig," said Dr. Know later. Williams had lost both his home and his livelihood.

Williams had been a true believer, not a mere employee. When the band reached NYC, he collected his tapes—including the 171-A material planned for Bad Brains' second album and some of the tapes for the planned compilation—and walked out of their lives. It would be years before he resumed his friendship with the band.

In the course of the tour, Bad Brains had lost their soundman, their next album, their compilation, and much of their moral authority. Next they lost the equipment Mo Sussman had bought for them. While HR watched the show the following night at the Wilson Center, some kids looted Bad Brains' van. A fan leaving the hall sounded the alarm, and MacKaye was one of those who ran out to see the culprits racing off.

The band had not one but two shows the next day, and now it had no equipment. When the musicians arrived late for the May 1st Yippie pro-pot parade in New York, another band had set up on the flat-bed truck. The other group refused to let the late-comers commandeer its equipment for the event, so HR threw himself in front of the truck's wheels to prevent it from leaving. Then he jumped onto the vehicle and took over the microphone, denouncing the Yippies as the truck moved down the street.

The band rushed to Boston for its evening gig, again arriving late. They had to beg the opening act to use its

equipment. Dr. Know was annoyed as SSD singer Springa kept trying to tell him that somebody important was backstage waiting to meet them. When he mentioned the man's name, it didn't click.

"Springa [was] saying 'man, Ric Ocasek is backstage,' and I'm, 'Who, what? I don't want to hear it man,'" says Dr. Know. "I was like asking this other band who was opening if I could use not just his guitar but his pick and Earl was like, 'Yeah can I use your drum sticks?' After I secured what it was I was supposed to play, I went back. Once I saw him, I finally realized who Springa was talking about."

Ocasek was the singer-songwriter of the Cars, the Boston band that had helped make new wave a top-ten commodity. Based on the ROIR cassette, he had become a huge Bad Brains fan. Learning that they had no equipment, Ocasek re-outfitted them and took them to record at his studio, Synchro-Sound. At the brink of self-destruction, Bad Brains had a new patron.

"It was like Cinderella or something," said Jenifer. "I didn't have a bass to play, so I had to play this other guy's stuff. After the show, Ric just came out and said, 'Do you need amps or whatever?' I was like wow! We got our [new] manager at the same time too." Long-time scenemaker and activist Tony Countey was reluctant to take the job, but decided he couldn't refuse when Dr. Know "told me that my mission was to save Bad Brains—who I thought were the greatest band in the world—from breaking up."

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As Bad Brains regrouped from its tumultuous tour, Minor Threat was on its way across America. In a sense, the two bands' trajectories had crossed: Bad Brains had peaked and Minor Threat was barreling past its former mentors. While Bad Brains' compilation album remained unfinished, Dischord's *Flex Your Head* sold its entire first pressing of 4000 in a week.

For MacKaye, any celebration was tempered by the fact that many people, including some close friends, were upset or at least ambivalent about Minor Threat's return. "We caught a lot of shit, people said we were selling out, that we'd get too popular, steal the shows, that we were just cashing in," MacKaye said. "They were all really threatened, which was really silly." Hearing the grumbling as lack of faith in him, MacKaye was hurt. At the 9:30 Club gig, he and the rest of the band had decided to defuse the tension with humor.

As the singer was carried onstage, the band tossed coins into the crowd, then launched into a tuneful new song called "Cashing In." MacKaye introduced himself in a show-bizzy voice, "Hi! I'm Ian—I don't think that we've met!" as Preslar screamed at the crowd, "We cashed in! We sold out! We cashed in!"

"It was our big fuck-you to all the people who gave us shit when we got back together, telling us that we were cashing in on our popularity, that we were doing it for the money," said MacKaye. "That hurt the fuck out of me 'cause loving DC so

In the course of the tour, Bad Brains had lost their soundman, their next album, their compilation, and much of their moral authority. Next they lost the equipment Mo Sussman had bought for them. While HR watched the show the following night at the Wilson Center, some kids looted Bad Brains' van.

much I just couldn't believe that it was DC that was doing it to me. The lyrics are as ridiculous as the idea that we were actually doing it for money."

The actual performance could easily have been overshadowed by the controversy and the band's mocking rebuke to its critics. But the chemistry was still there. Howard Wuelfing, now freelancing for the *Washington Post*, raved: "They raged, they soared, they conquered. In fact, the reformed Minor Threat very nearly surpassed the grotesquely high expectations everybody held for them on this, their first public appearance since last year. The playing was consistently outstanding, a superlative display of disciplined high energy, the band was speedy yet precise, forcible yet expressive." He ended the review by asking, "Are Minor Threat the best punk band in the world? I don't know, I haven't seen them all. Maybe."

Minor Threat hit the road quickly after its two reintroductions DC shows, determined that this tour would be everything that the earlier one was supposed to be. Still, for the musicians to spend long periods in a cramped van was challenging. "We don't necessarily get along that great," MacKaye noted. "We'll practice for about two-three hours at a time and maybe 20-30 minutes will be actual playing, the rest of the time we'll be discussing, arguing, going off on each other."

As the tour wound through smaller cities like Reno, Lansing, Minneapolis, and Austin, they met kindred bands: Seven Seconds, Big Boys, Dicks, Husker Du, Toxic Reasons, Articles Of Faith, Crucifucks, and more. In those smaller scenes, the band found what Preslar described as "more [of a] sense of people together and doing something they like doing"—like DC and unlike such more established scenes as San Francisco's.

These bands were supported by a burgeoning array of fanzines, dances, music, and labels. These were the makings of a permanent underground that mavericks like MacKaye began to dream might challenge the monopoly of the hated corporate rock industry. "I think it's great," he said, "what is happening right now, this kind of local or regional music scene, as opposed to the nationwide music we've been living with all these years."

MacKaye was energized by the big, enthusiastic crowds his

photo / Gregory R. Staley — courtesy Soft Skull Press



HR

band was attracting, but determined not to let prominence alter his personal code. His vision was that Minor Threat could "become a popular band without picking up the usual shit that most of the big bands get into. Where we stay a pure band, where we stay true to what we started out as."

The band came to embody an unofficial but clearly understood ethos: all ages shows, low door prices, minimal PR, no rock 'n' roll bullshit. After playing in front of over 1,000 people in LA, MacKaye told *Flipside*, "Out here you hear 'record label' and 'getting signed.' You don't hear that in Washington. Bands just want to play. Out here it's a big market, people form bands with the intention to 'make it.' We formed Teen Idles out of boredom and formed Minor Threat as a vehicle to express what we were thinking about. If we have nothing to say, then I don't want to become 'popular'."

It was a powerful, even revolutionary creed. But although MacKaye said "we," he was the only band member totally committed to it. Over time, the other members would grow tired of living with his sweeping idealistic statements.

Minor Threat also found that it was preceded by DC's tough reputation and the straight-edge controversy. While MacKaye enjoyed the local tribal customs, he was not very excited about facing potential physical assault from kids who wanted to prove that their scene "ruled" or resented "Straight Edge."

On stage at the Tool and Die in San Francisco, MacKaye was jumped by Bob Noxious and a cohort.

"Unfortunately, it's even gotten to point of gang warfare in some areas," he said after the brief incident.

"We're really proud that in Washington, DC, which is not an entertainment town, not a music or a club town of any sort, we put together a band and got records out and financed it all," said Lyle Preslar. "What you hear about DC is true, very few fights, people being positive. Being in DC has its advantages. Because it isn't an entertainment town, we don't have the exploitation that goes on out here."

"Who rules what

city and which bands are tougher. I felt people were challenging me because I was from DC, which had this apparently incredible reputation. I am talking basically in the fighting sense, who is tougher than who." To MacKaye, it seemed that there were more important battles.

The straightedge issue was almost always the first question asked in the many interviews Minor Threat did on the tour. "Everywhere we went," MacKaye said, "people wanted to fight me to prove I was wrong" about his opposition to drugs.

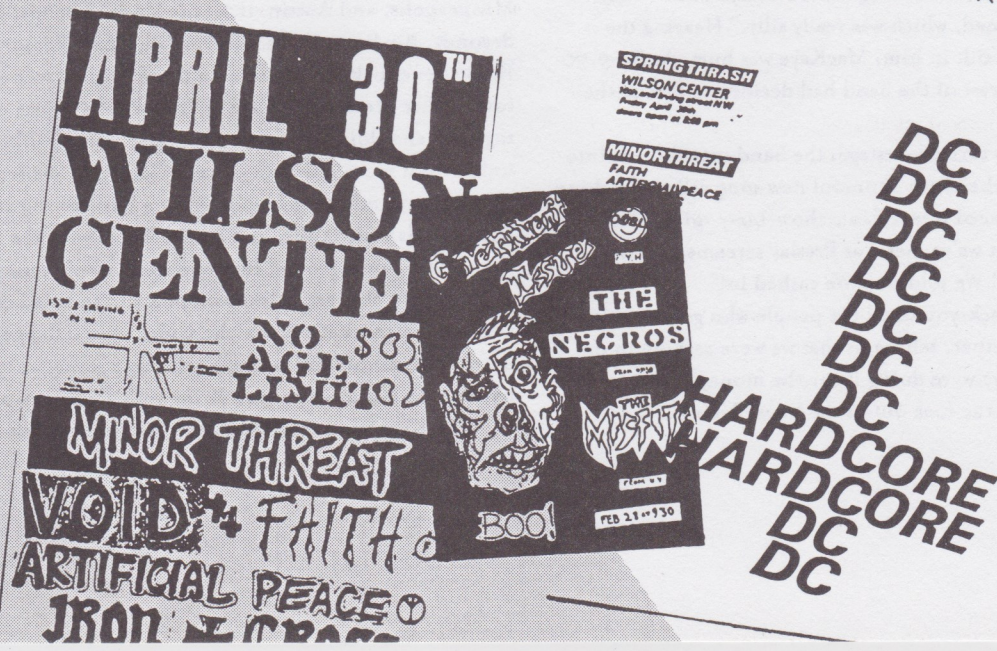
While the singer seemed to take some satisfaction from his ability to so threaten people with a simple idea, he and the band also repeatedly tried to emphasize that straightedge was not a monastic canon but a common-sensical idea of personal responsibility. "We don't pull any of this 'if you drink you suck, if you take drugs you suck,'" said Preslar. "It's the idea that if you want something, you're not going to allow yourself to be distracted, to be fucked up with a lot of bullshit."

Straightedge "is not just not taking drugs or not drinking," echoed Baker. "It's an outlook on life. In the sense that you want to be in control of your body and yourself, you want to have a clear view of what's going on. We will never, never tell you what to do."

In San Francisco, the band was interviewed by a new fanzine that would ultimately be nearly as hotly debated as straightedge itself. *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll* had evolved from the radio show of the same name. The publication became controversial for its outspokenly left-wing orientation.

The magazine's founders, Tim Yohannon and Jeff Bale, were aging counter-culturists who sought to force the implicit politics of punk to the surface, into a more conscious, systematic, and active opposition to Reaganism and American society at large. Their first step had been to release a heavily political hardcore compilation called *Not So Quiet on the Western Front*.

In its way, *MRR* was not far from the revolutionary fervor of Bad Brains or MDC. Unlike in the '60s, however, there was no



unifying youth-culture cause like Vietnam and the draft. Even the threat of nuclear war seemed vague and distant compared to bodies of friends coming home in boxes as in the '60s. While impressed by the passion and openness of Yohannon, Bale and the rest of the MRR crew, a skeptical Jeff Nelson said "They want a movement like in the '60s but it's just not there." Such attitudes, combined with the divisions created by incidents like those on the Bad Brains' tour, made it seem unlikely that hardcore punks would ever expand their fight beyond their narrow subculture.

...

For all the controversy about straightedge and the band's internal bickering, MacKaye returned to DC full of excitement over what he had seen. While Bad Brains had been mortally wounded by their tour experience, Minor Threat had upheld its lofty reputation. The musicians made "a relationship with this band more than just 'fan' and 'band,'" wrote Al Flipside. "They themselves are living examples of what they talk about in their songs."

Minor Threat carried Washington's banner as well as its own. "We're really proud that in Washington, DC, which is not an entertainment town, not a music or a club town of any sort, we put together a band and got records out and financed it all," said Preslar. "What you hear about DC is true, very few fights, people being positive. Being in DC has its advantages. Because it isn't an entertainment town, we don't have the exploitation that goes on out here."

"We are proud to be a part of a scene that has a big reputation that is true," agreed MacKaye. "Washington was giving me a bad feeling so we wanted to tour as soon as possible. Now I can't wait to get back."

Shortly after his return, however, MacKaye read an interview with a new Bethesda band, Hate From Ignorance, in *If This Goes On*. He found the words of guitarist Kevin Mattson: "I think going out and touring the world isn't very sincere. I don't think touring the world makes you a punk band." Bass player Eugene Bogan and singer Clark Chapin dismissed Minor Threat even more directly.

Then MacKaye found Sharon Cheslow's review of the Wilson Center show, which extolled Faith but questioned Minor Threat's very legitimacy. After writing that the band seemed "stale" and "bored," she asked, "What about Ian's statements not five months ago that it's good to start a new band with new songs so that you remain underground? Playing old songs just to please an audience and using the name Minor Threat to attract an instant audience seems far way from Ian's original attitudes."

MacKaye was stunned. He felt as betrayed as Cheslow had when her band, Chalk Circle, had been rejected by the harDCore crowd. "It was just a slap in the face," he said later. "I was really hurt by all that crap."

Underlying MacKaye and Cheslow's hurt was an idealism forged in the intimate camaraderie of the once-tiny DC teen

punk scene.

As Cheslow noted in an interview with MacKaye for the next issue of *If This Goes On* the dispute "all came about due to misunderstanding and lack of communication . . . I was so disillusioned, I thought 'How could Ian be doing this?'"

Cheslow apologized, but the flap showed how harDCore had changed. The scene had once been a tight-knit group of friends—a family even—but now it was much, much larger, and as a result, increasingly fragmented. Communication wasn't as direct, cliques were more hardened, relations were more impersonal. It was an ironic but painful turnabout from two years before. To many new fans who didn't know MacKaye, Nelson, and their circle personally, Minor Threat and Dischord now constituted the punk establishment. ©

This article is from chapters five and six of Dance of Days: Two Decades of Punk In the Nation's Capital. Washington DC's creative, politically-insurgent punk scene is studied for the first time by local activist Mark Andersen and arts writer Mark Jenkins. The nation's capital gave birth to arguably the most fertile and influential punk underground of the 1980s and '90s. Dance Of Days recounts the rise of trailblazing artists such as Bad Brains, Henry Rollins, Minor Threat, Rites of Spring, Fugazi and Bikini Kill, while examining the roots of PMA, straightedge, Dischord Records, Revolution Summer, Positive Force, and Riot Grrrl. This book provides a window on the hidden history of a grassroots rock revolution that burst into the mainstream with Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit."

Dance of Days: Two Decades of Punk In the Nation's Capital will be published by Soft Skull Press in March, 2001. Buy it from a good bookstore then, or order it now, "DIY direct" from softskull.com, and get 25% off the cover price. Check softskull.com for other awesome, kickass, antifascist books: No More Prisons, You Don't Have to Fuck People Over to Survive, and Fortunate Son: George W. Bush and the Making of an American President.

Mark Andersen is the co-founder of Positive Force DC, a punk activist collective, while Mark Jenkins writes about film for the Washington City Paper and about music for the Washington Post, Time Out New York, WAMU-FM, and National Public Radio's All Things Considered.

All of Mark Andersen's royalties from the sale of this book will be donated to the Arthur S. Flemming Center, a cooperative project of Emmaus Services for the Aging, Positive Force DC, the Washington Peace Center, Brian MacKenzie Infoshop, Peter Maurin Center/Catholic Worker Bookstore, the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington and Jews United For Justice. The Center (1426 9th Street NW) will be an outpost of radical arts, organizing, education and service in the Shaw neighborhood, opening in summer 2001. For more information, or to send a donation, contact Emmaus Services For The Aging, 5 Thomas Circle, Washington DC 20005, 202-745-1200, 202-745-1246(fax), emmausdc@aol.com.



“Witness Three” and her children and grandchildren were nervous as they started heating food on their stove around six a.m. the morning of December 13, 1998. Planes and helicopters had been circling around their small village, Santo Domingo, in the northeastern Arauca region of Colombia for most of the previous day. The helicopters were battling with the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrillas in the brush about half a mile from the village, shooting machine guns at them as they swooped low. Around 10 a.m., Witness Three went to put more wood on the stove, when everything went black. Seconds later her children and grandchildren were screaming and bleeding. Her two daughters, ages five and seven, were dead. Her son and grandson died soon after.

“He was saying ‘Help me, mom, help me,’” the middle-aged woman, who did not want to reveal her name, told an international human rights tribunal this fall. The tribunal was convened by Northwestern University’s International Center for Human Rights and director Douglas Cassell.

In all, 19 people including seven children were killed that morning in Santo Domingo. At least 25 more were seriously injured.

“Witness Two,” a girl who was 16 years old at the time, had gotten up early that day to help prepare for a bazaar the town was hosting to

raise money for the local elementary school. She and her friends were to assist the 10–12-year-old girls who were named “Queens of the Town.” But they were frightened by the shooting and fly-overs, and tried to leave Santo Domingo. They got about a quarter mile down the road before turning back, afraid to leave their families behind. Back in town, they dressed in white and sat in the road so that the soldiers in the helicopters could see they were civilians, not guerrillas. But around 10 a.m. Witness Two saw a helicopter dropping what she thought looked like rolls of paper with smoke coming out. Then everything became dark. When she tried to run, she realized she couldn’t move her shoulder.

“I could hear my friends screaming all around me,” she said. “They were desperate.”

She made it to the drug store, where she found the dead bodies of some of her friends. About 15 minutes later, a truck came and people loaded about 30 wounded and the dead bodies of several children on for transport to another town. Witness Two said that helicopters followed them and shot at them several times as the truck fled the town.

“I was thinking they would be doing us a favor if they killed us, because it would end the suffering we were going through,” she said. She later found out that her shoulder had been shattered by shrapnel; it is still disabled and she still has a piece of shrapnel lodged in her arm. Her sisters legs were injured by shrapnel as well.



MEMORIES

OF A

MASSACRE

FINDING OUT THE TRUTH IN SANTO DOMINGO

By Kari Lydersen

Witness One was one of the people driving the truck. He had stayed at a friend's house outside Santo Domingo the night before because of the military presence. That morning someone arrived at the house on a motorcycle with a seriously wounded young boy. He was told about the bombing, and took the truck to collect the wounded.

"We put a white shirt out the window so they would know we weren't guerrillas, but they kept firing on us," he said. "They were the type of helicopters owned by the armed forces."

Witness Four was on his farm outside the town when the massacre happened. He could see helicopters dropping bombs on the town. Later, he and his brother found out that their mother and sister had been killed. His truck was also fired on by helicopters as he desperately tried to reach the town.

"I saw my mother dead, I saw a woman beheaded, I also saw other friends who were dead," he said.

The witnesses and other residents of Santo Domingo say they have no doubt the attack on their town came from Colombian military helicopters. But the Colombian government maintains that the town was decimated by a powerful homemade car bomb placed in an abandoned truck by FARC guerrillas.

The aim of the tribunal is to determine whether the government's story is false, to learn if they were responsible for the massacre, and to ascertain whether they violated five international human rights treaties in the process. While it is not judicially binding in any way, human rights workers hope the publicity the tribunal garners will show the Colombian government that its brutality and impunity is not going unnoticed.

Living in the shadow of military helicopters and armed soldiers and militia members is nothing new for residents of Colombia. A brutal, chaotic civil war between the guerrillas, the government, and paramilitary groups aligned has raged for years. The Colombian government, which courts multinational investment and maintains a socioeconomic structure with a horrific concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, is pitted against leftist guerrillas who want to redistribute the wealth and keep corporate and US exploitation and influence out of their country. Brutality is reportedly rampant on both sides, in particular from the well-armed right wing paramilitary groups. The government claims it has no ties to the paramilitaries, but it is widely known that the government turns the other cheek to their activities while supplying them with munitions and political favors. Colombian President Andres Pastrana has publicly vowed to crack down on paramilitary violence, but reports have shown that the paramilitary activity goes on unabated.

There is an average of a massacre (defined as the killing of three or more people in one area at one time) a day in Colombia, with 399 reported last year. There is a 98 percent impunity rate for the perpetrators of this brutality, with not a single person brought to trial last year for any of the massacres that occurred.

The majority of these slaughters are attributed to the paramilitary right wing death squads. The very day of the tribunal, papers carried news of two more massacres that left at least 12 dead. The killings were attributed to paramilitary groups.

"While they talk about a pacification campaign, in reality the violence and assassinations go on as always," says Gloria Gomez, a representative of the Joel Sierra Human Rights Organization. "Pastrana is spreading this version to the mainstream press across the world, but it is not the truth." Gomez's organization is currently being prosecuted by the government for slander regarding a poster it has been distributing featuring a child's colorful portrayal of the events of December 13, 1998. The poster features a black helicopter dropping bombs on the small civilian hamlet.

Father Javier Girardo, who also made the trip up from Colombia, notes that the bombing campaigns are only part of a "pattern of aggression meant to show the civilian population that they should not get involved with the guerrillas or oppositional political parties. I've seen soldiers decapitating a boy's head in front of the whole town and playing soccer with it. It's intimidation."

While he admits that the left-wing guerrillas have committed human rights violations as well, Father Girardo insists that many reported guerilla violations are set up by the government. He described how the government has been known to execute civilians in a town, then dress their bodies in guerrilla fatigues and place weapons and literature near their bodies. The government also accuses the guerrillas of using civilians as human shields—a handy way of explaining heavy civilian casualties in bombing campaigns like the one in Santo Domingo.

"The Colombian government dodges its responsibility and puts the blame on the victims," says Colombian attorney Tito Gaitan.

The Republic of Colombia, who refused to send representation to the tribunal, was defended by two Chicago attorneys. In lieu of direct representation, the Colombian government sent a sensational government-produced video called *La Gran Verdad en Santo Domingo* (The Great Truth in Santo Domingo). The video featured B-horror movie-style music and footage of actors dressed as guerrillas negotiating a transfer of 1,300 kilos of cocaine, as an English voice-over described the government's efforts to "keep the dangerous drugs from reaching the US."

The video concludes with news anchors asking why the guerrillas would blame the massacre on the military. The voice-over answers: "To convince human rights organizations to lobby the US government to stop the flow of funds to the Colombian Army for fighting drug trafficking." The words "drug trafficking" are solemnly repeated again, with a close-up of a coca leaf.

It is precisely this argument—and the US government's support of it—that has many human rights activists afraid that violence and massacres will increase thanks to the recent passage of the US's "Plan Colombia." The plan provides \$1.3 billion in military aid for the

The bombing of Santo Domingo is only part of a "pattern of aggression meant to show the civilian population that they should not get involved with the guerrillas or oppositional political parties. I've seen soldiers decapitating a boy's head in front of the whole town and playing soccer with it. It's intimidation," says Father Javier Girardo

"war" on drugs, which will doubtlessly be used in the war on the guerrillas and meted out to paramilitary organizations.

But the Colombian government's tale of drug trafficking and a guerrilla truck bomb contradicts with the evidence in Santo Domingo. Barry Romo, founder of Vietnam Veterans Against the War and human rights activist, testified that the shrapnel fragments and other ballistic evidence found at the scene would be inconsistent with a truck bomb. The shrapnel pieces which Romo found in the town this past summer came from factory-made perforated bombs, he said, not the homemade types the guerrillas would have used. He also noted that bullet holes in houses were consistent with shots from above, not from guerrillas shooting on the ground as the army maintains.

But perhaps most shocking was Romo's revelation that at least some of the munitions were of US origin, including a bomb fragment he found with the letters "NO, space, EBOM, space," for "NOSEBOMB."

Romo's testimony is backed up by the FBI itself, which issued a report in May confirming that specimens recovered after the massacre came from "a United States designed AN-M41 fragmentation bomb and fuse." Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy brought this fact to the attention of the Secretary of State's office in an August 30 letter, saying, "It is my understanding that this incident took place in the course of anti-drug operations by the Colombian military, which was using equipment, including airplanes, donated by the United States."

Leahy, who is a ranking member of the foreign operations subcommittee, asked that aid to the responsible Colombian military units be suspended until justice is served.

But justice has been anything but served, attorney Gaitan explains. The case has been pinballing back and forth from military to civilian courts, with the military currently having jurisdiction. He said a judge has rejected efforts to have the case moved back to civilian court. In the military court, Gaitan notes, the investigators "eat in the same mess hall and sleep in the same barracks as they people they are investigating," making justice unlikely. The Air Force closed their own investigation into the incident last May.

"The Air Force did nothing but carry out the legal formalities and say the events were attributable to the guerrillas," Gaitan says. "Nothing will be done by the military courts."

The counsel standing in for the Republic of Colombia argued two main points at the tribunal: that the principle of exhaustion of domestic processes should be followed—meaning the Colombian government should be allowed to complete its investigation before international forces step in—and that the presence and past violence of FARC rebels in the area is so prevalent that the truck bomb theory would be plausible. The defense also insinuated that the rebels might have helicopters and factory-made bombs.

Some experts agree with this assertion. "As cocaine was pushed out of Bolivia in the late 1970s, it moved into Colombia and created an opportunity for guerrillas to obtain large amounts of money and buy better weapons than the government has,"

Frank Safford, a professor of Latin American history at Northwestern, testified. In addition to transporting cocaine, Safford said, the guerrillas get money through extortion of ranchers and oil companies.

"The Colombian government is far from having a monopoly on power," he said. "It may well be considered weaker than the guerrilla forces. The army remains a passive element in the struggle going on between the paramilitaries and the guerrillas."

In the government's video, a staged conversation between guerrillas "Jojoy" and "Grannobles" includes the phrases, "We are prepared to use explosives" on "those bastards." The defense also pointed to the fact that the FARC and the ELN, another guerrilla group, have been known to use explosives to blow up oil pipelines in the Arauca area, killing civilians in the process.

But, says Colombian union leader Alonso Capillo, these arguments are used mainly to "justify the actions of the paramilitary groups along the oil pipelines." He notes the case of the indigenous U'wa people not far from the area. The U'wa are facing the destruction of their land and way of life because of a planned pipeline for the multi-national company Occidental Petroleum. The U'wa have threatened to commit mass suicide if the pipeline is built, since they see that as killing the earth and their history and culture.

Campillo explained how the U'wa and other people who oppose the government are threatened with "pre-announced massacres" in which graffiti will appear heralding the coming of helicopters.

"The peasants suffer constant harassment and extortion by hooded individuals and terrorists who travel with the military," he says. "They're facing permanent threats."

When asked by the defense why people would join the guerrillas, Campillo said that, "Young people are growing up in a culture of permanent war, permanent assassinations. It's what they understand and it's what defines their future."

The tribunal will review evidence until mid-October, and a verdict on whether and how Colombia violated international human rights law will be announced in early December (they had not yet ruled come press time). It is part of a growing movement of international tribunals for crimes which aren't being brought to justice in their own countries. There have been three other international tribunals regarding Colombian atrocities in the past few years—two in Canada and one in the Colombian town of Barranca.

"The massacre in Santo Domingo is one among thousands of serious crimes committed in Colombia every year," says Father Girardo. "And one of the most profound problems we encounter is impunity. International tribunals like this are necessary because even if they don't affect the judiciary, they bring injustice to light in the international community. It shows the government and the paramilitaries that in other parts of the world there are people watching." ©

FREE VERSE FIGHT CLUB

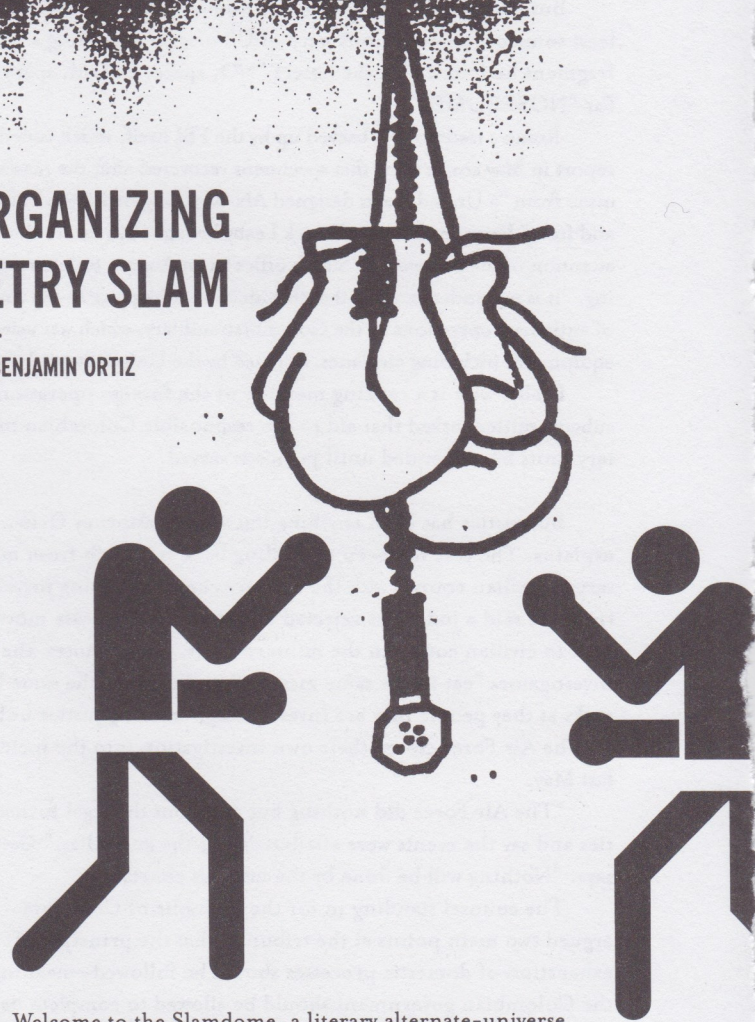
DO-IT-YOURSELF ARTS ORGANIZING AT THE SAN ANTONIO POETRY SLAM

BY BENJAMIN ORTIZ

"The messages of great poets to each man and woman are, Come to us on equal terms, Only then can you understand us. We are no better than you . . . Did you suppose there could be only one Supreme? We affirm there can be unnumbered Supremes . . ."

—Walt Whitman

The staticky scratch of a turntable needle plucks into a trumpeting groove of dramatic bombast, bringing Zarathustra's fire from the mountains for fight-to-the-finish phonetic fisticuffs at tonight's full-court, one-on-one, make-it-take-it poetry rumble. We find ourselves in media res, the joust afoot, vendettas flagged and fallen, the bitter taste of beer and too much cigarette smoke fueling hearty wordsmiths to more and more feats of fearless foolishness on the microphone passing hands, the masses encircling victors and consoling the vanquished, and always the words, oh the words, representing all sides, cultures, and peoples in a microcosm of this country's formative tongues: formal verse, free verse, monologues, mano-a-mano sonnets, parables, odes, ballads, schizophrenic rambling, antichrist rants, hip-hop meditation, old-school rap, new-school lyricism, athletic assonance, dirty limericks, head-to-head haiku, twisted tales, iambic pentameter, napkin-scribbled words of wisdom, beat-box scratch-verse, abstract experimentalism, drunken-master mind-over-matter magic, all styles and subjects for the sport of the spoken word.



Welcome to the Slamdome, a literary alternate-universe wherein the poets are gladiators and the spectators lust for word blood. If you're lucky, you might appear on the arena's Jumbotron to spout an impromptu heroic couplet, as the Slam Silver Dancers flex choreographed, pyrotechnic mimes to the rhythms of Gwendolyn Brooks' "We Real Cool" and the crowd does the wave at the drop of a smooth-sounding slant rhyme. It's a brave new world of startling possibilities, and people all around the country are turning this vision into reality bit by bit through the hybrid artistic medium known as "poetry slam," the passport to contemporary pleasures of the spoken word.

SLAM: THE BEST-KEPT SECRET OF POETIC PUGILISM

"A slam bears more than a passing resemblance to a fight club."—Steven G. Kellman, San Antonio film and culture critic, upon visiting the local slam.

Despite burgeoning popularity, even in Chicago (birthplace of the poetry slam), most folks do not know their populist poetic counterparts, who weekly do battle in smoky bars and yearly trek to the Mecca of spoken-word sport: the National Poetry Slam. Some years ago, I lived and performed in Chicago as a spoken-word poet, but had no experience whatsoever of poetry slam, despite its popularity among some bards my age. I had only murky information based on second-hand reports of vicious heckling and verse almost come to blows at the Green Mill Tavern, with no inkling of why Marc Smith, former construction worker and founder of slam, was prompted in his own time to create such a gimmick as poetry with scorecards to get audiences to listen. "The scene back then was smaller, pathetic, stupid, boring, pompous, and very elite," Smith told the *Chicago Reader* in 1999. "If you weren't in the higher circles, like from the School of the Art Institute, you were incredibly snubbed."

I found similar elitism and lack of energy when I moved to San Antonio in the spring of 1998. I met individual poets with astounding talent unrealized and unheard by potential audiences who were, perhaps rightly, turned off by largely self-indulgent literary exercises in navel-gazing. Moreover, there was no solid community with support networks creating opportunities for no-name poets to actually thrive at their artistic profession, since big institutions and published writers seemed content with sporadic events but showed little interest in weekly forums.

But then I attended the National Poetry Slam in August of that year, held just up the road in Austin. I saw 45 teams (of four poets each) who slammed their way out of regular local series all over the country in order to qualify to converge in Texas. I saw 1,200-plus fans pack the Paramount Theatre, with scalpers on the sidewalk outside. I saw CNN and NPR following wordsmiths from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, that sends a brand-new team of rookies every year to Nationals, winning the championship that year and propelling once-unknown bards into national stardom. I saw the light.

On May 4, 1999, the doors opened at a San Antonio indie/punk club to a standing-room-only crowd (150-plus), kicking off the weekly series that I founded, hosted, and organized to become renowned as one of the most popular, wild shows in the national slam circuit. That night, people drank too much beer, consumed well over 40 poems at a sprawling show that lasted night until nearly three in the morning, and mobbed the poets afterwards like Wheaties-box superstars, with freestyle-rap intermissions and verbal competition spilling over into spontaneous microphone melee driven by the all-out athleticism of becoming possessed by one's own words that whip the poet's body into motion and the crowd into a frenzy over the most elemental of art forms.

My interest in starting the slam came from a variety of factors based in the peculiarly difficult San Antonio arts scene: (1) Something like slam was not going to happen unless someone just up and did it, and though I hoped to avoid a huge undertaking on top of a 40-hour-a-week job, I realized that no one else wanted to do the work, so I would have to take it on; (2) I wanted to help enliven, diversify, and democratize San Antonio poetry by demonstrating a strong do-it-yourself example of what can be done without arts funding, without the legitimation, validation, or permission from higher powers—and the slam ran on no budget or fuel except for hard work and endless promotional verbiage, drawing talented artists not recognized as significant by those big-name people in town with budgets and connections; (3) I wanted to draw out and nurture new literary talent through a fun, weekly event devoted to performance poetry, and to expand the audience for poetry and make it as popular as any spectator sport or rock 'n' roll show; (4) I wanted to establish a sustained "regulation" slam venue that would qualify to send a team of four SA poets yearly to the National Poetry Slam, which would immediately hook us up to similar do-it-yourself opportunities around the country to tour, meet other poets, and bring that energy back to town, while getting our city's art into the national mix; (5) San Antonio needed more night life; (6) poets needed to get laid more than rockers; and (7) this town needed an aggressive, confrontational forum to break from Southern hospitality, tongue biting, and back-room gossip. Slam said: Let's take it to the mic!

San Antonio got all of that and more, and I got a scar out of it. Literally. Slam did not last at the indie/punk-rock club for long, because the owners kept booking awful emo-core bands and screwing up the slam schedule, not taking advantage of all the people slam drew, because they wanted the bar to be their rock romper room. Sadly, and without fail, this seems to be the general San Antonio rock-bar owner mentality. And then one night, the owners had booked a self-described "math rock" band from Boston to play after slam, which ran until two-thirty in the morning. By the time the band took the stage, I had traded verbal barbs while on the mic against skinheads in attendance (who actually liked my taunt, "the only good fascist is a dead fascist!"), rockers, the guest band, and the bar owners. Though regular slam patrons recognized that the spirit of slam was how some poets battled it out on stage, the guest band was not thrilled. As they took stage, I flashed the devil sign and took a stick in the head from the drummer.

After that night, I almost quit and dissolved the event that had marked me for life while taking money, time, and blood out of my pocket. But we moved it around, redubbing it "puro ¡SLAM!" in honor of San Antonio's mixed linguistic and cultural heritage. Pure, 100%, absolute ¡SLAM! It came back with a fury. Part social confrontation, part art forum, part puro free-speech soapbox, every other night seemed a crisis of legitimation, with verbal vendettas exploding into shouting matches, arrogant poets booed off stage, hip-hop ciphers about to break out in every corner, and a few people drinking way too much. It continued to draw 110+ attendance on average every single Tuesday night, better turnout than I've seen at most poetry readings anywhere in the country.

No Punk

By Amalia L. Ortiz

Pimpin' plastic grooves
in these X-large 501 Blues
tramplin' through
trance-N-dental moves
acid hues
crystal ssssh-rooms
Alien boy digs
virtual space junk funk
transitory spunk
NO PUNK!

Only trip hop
slip hop
on the hip hop tip
junky jazz
funky trance
ambient energy ecstasy ...
little speed racer
he's pumpin'
jumpin' jungle junk
rollin' on the "E" that's bunk
NO PUNK!

Acid EVERYTHING:

acid rave
acid house
acid rain
jazz
trace
Phat funky fogger bass
resounding stereo sound
deep underground
bass pound
pound
pound ...
he's spell bound ...

He slips
sloppy trip hoppy
rave junky gets props cuz'
house monkey
he don't stop
he just slippity slides
peace out
jabberin' jive 'bout his honkey vibe
what?
rollin' deep w/his
suburban tribe?
from the Northside?
taking lessons on being alive
Why he flunk?
NO PUNK!

THE SECRET REVEALED

"Slam causes pain and is a good thing." —Bob Holman,
New York City poet, organizer, and slam
philosopher in Austin 1998.

But how can a few scoring and heckling gimmicks generate interest in poetry to such an effusive degree? Gary Mex Glazner—editor of the anthology *Poetry Slam: The Competitive Art of Performance Poetry*, producer of the first national contest in San Francisco in 1990, and pioneer of the form—answers this question in his introduction to the anthology, citing respect for the audience as key: "In 1986, Marc Smith started the Poetry Slam in Chicago with the idea of giving the audience a voice, letting the audience say if they liked a poem. By cultivating their participation, poetry slams build an audience for poetry, bringing everyday workers, bus drivers, waitresses, and cops to a poetry reading and letting them cut loose."

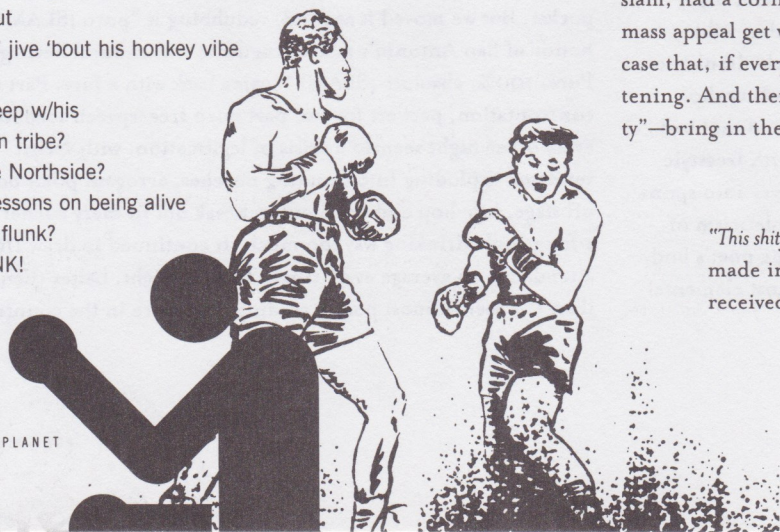
Glazner recounts how Smith empowered the Chicago audience as valued critics, giving five randomly picked spectators scorecards to rate individual poems on a scale of 0.0 to 10.0 and encouraging on-the-spot vocal reactions from everyone else, with a tournament structure and prizes for those scoring highest. From there, the seed spread to both coasts, culminating in the first national contest and the continued diaspora of Chicago performance poetics to all parts of the country. By extension, the anthology charts the growing popularity of slam from the old days to its current status as an international phenomenon, having inspired a documentary film (*SlamNation: The Sport of the Spoken Word*, directed by Paul Devlin), coverage by major media outlets (including a *60 Minutes* segment in November 1999), and the sprouting of slams all over the globe as grassroots American cultural export.

The true coup of slam is its inclusivity, over and against most other poetry forums. Diverse by age, ethnicity, race, and economic background, the national circuit includes Vietnam veterans, roofers, and cops, and my experiences in San Antonio have led me to debate aesthetics with pet groomers, waitresses, ticket-takers, convenience-store clerks, active and reserve members of the armed forces, candlestick makers, yard laborers, etc. Every time I go to a Spurs game, I see someone at the gate who has a kind word about slam and wants to see me there next week.

But with so many people in on the game, doesn't this inclusive poetry party displace the cocktail cognoscenti who, prior to slam, had a corner on the poetic market? Doesn't this poetry of mass appeal get watered down by the mainstream? It must be the case that, if everyone is listening, therefore no one is really listening. And there MUST be someone to safeguard poetic "quality"—bring in the cultural technicians for this job.

EVERYONE'S A CRITIC

"This shit you're doing here, it ain't art!" —a comment made in spring 2000 by a disgruntled poet who received a low score at the San Antonio slam.



With the advent of slam internationally, even those who once had ivory-tower immunity from the grumblings of the groundlings have had to stop, take notice, and comment. Witness Harold Bloom in a round-table discussion published in the *Paris Review* last spring:

And, of course, now it's all gone to hell. I can't bear these accounts I read in the Times and elsewhere of these poetry slams, in which various young men and women in various late-spots are declaiming rant and nonsense at each other. The whole thing is judged by an applause meter which is actually not there, but might as well be. This isn't even silly; it is the death of art.

Let me try to put aside my amusement at the paradox of an academic critic declaiming, with rant and nonsense, the death of everything in startled reaction to new cultural currents (the end of history and the last man have come and gone, yet we still seem to be decrying and therefore celebrating perpetual apocalypse). Despite the fact that slam emphasizes, in judging criteria, both the writing and performing of a given poem as the reference points for deciding on a score, the stress on performance seems to be what makes many academic and text-based poets nervous. In the *60 Minutes* segment from November 1999, former poet laureate Robert Pinsky attempts a more measured criticism of slam with a definition of "classic poetry" in contrast to "slam poetry": "Not to be pompous, but anybody tries to be an artist. You're competing with Shakespeare and Dickinson . . . You're trying to make a work of art that does not depend on your presence." For Pinsky, the emphasis on performance compromises the art of poetry as concerned solely with language independent of the author's utterance.

This reminds me of one night when I faced the drunken, stinking masses at puro ¡SLAM! and asked, "What is a poem? How is a poem different from a novel or short story?" Someone shouted, "Novels are long!" to which I answered, "Have you read Beowulf lately?" Does anyone remember that poetry originated as a spoken form in pre-literate societies? (Hey, if bigtime Ivy League critics are gonna take a piss on us, at least I can talk aesthetics with a homeboy at the urinal after a few beers during slam intermission—at such moments, I've found more wisdom about flow, meter, and poetic device than most articles I read.)

IS THERE A HOMER IN THE HOUSE?

"For them to say slam is not poetry is like a ballet dancer saying break dancing is not dance." —Eliot Weinberger, in the New York Times.

In the *Nation*, Alice Fulton suggests a more expansive, holistic sense of "poetry": "The everyday is where poetry is 'lived,' where it acquires the force of majority. The Zeitgeist is expressed more clearly by the obscure many than by the acclaimed few. It is within the ordinary gossip and buzz, within the thousands of unclaimed poems, that poetry takes shape." The valences of orality, community, and ritual subsist in "texts" produced by pre-literate,

DISCO SUCKS

By Jason "Shaggy" Gossard

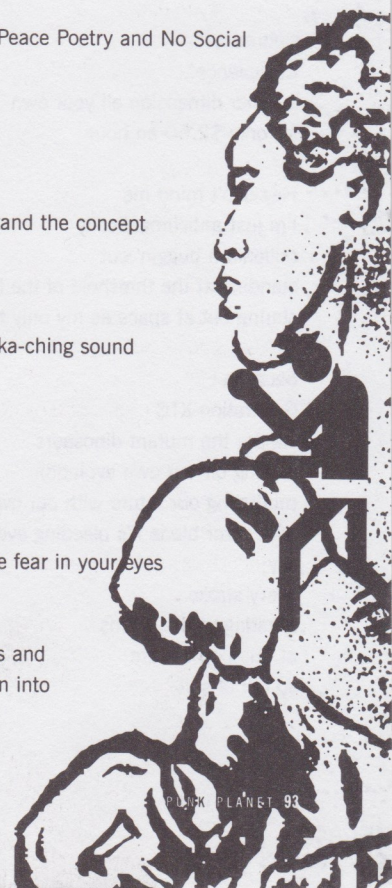
Welcome to the hottest disco of the 21st Century
DJ Apathy is dropping the beats while the
Not Me Generation stares at their feet
Oblivious to this disease of indifference
Filling its dance card and
Seducing its latest line of lovers with some kind words and a drink

Welcome to the trendiest nightclub of the 21st century
packed elbow to elbow with dancers
too entranced with their own internal rhythms to notice
just how crowded
and just how messed up
the dance floor is
in desperate need of a DJ who can spin a little history
play us another
'67 Summer of Love
'68 Democratic Convention
'69 Woodstock
to jump start
this cold at heart
generation
inspire

70 thousand poets to dance in the streets of Chicago
LA

New York
in a second wave of love-ins
sit-ins
be-ins
bed-ins
join in and
come together
right now
turn on the masses with three days of Peace Poetry and No Social
Classes
verbal locksmiths
unlocking the doors of perception
with the keys of artistic expression
setting free the mindset
of a generation of thinkers who understand the concept
that what makes this world go around
is the people in your town
not the wad of bills in your pocket
or that Pavlovian don't make me drool ka-ching sound

And I see you
alone
dancing in the corner
thinking you are allowed
to ignore this crowd
because the sores on your soles and the fear in your eyes
give you permission to just not care
but I see past generations
with the same sores and the same fears and
the same bad trips spiralling them down into



Alice's Not So Wonderland
 unwilling to walk away like you so easily do
 knowing that somewhere down this long and winding road
 there is a tea party
 mad as can be
 I agree
 but with room enough for all
 cups overflowing with prosperity
 plates piled high with charity
 and with a little perseverance
 and a lot of cooperation
 we can all make it there together
 and indulge in this celebration

So welcome to the hottest disco of the 21st Century
 DJ Apathy is dropping the beats while the
 Not Me Generation shuffles their feet and
 waits for us to come in off of the streets
 asking for the next dance
 requesting the next song
 as we lead this throng of I's
 into a chorus line of We's
 and bring about the possibility
 No
 the reality
 of a caring and compassionate nation
 which sets out to prove
 that it can be glorified
 diversified
 and truly unified
 under one unstoppable groove

Evolution X

By Amalia L. Ortiz

Culture...
 Conscience...
 another dimension all your own
 for only \$2.50 an hour
 Hey don't mind me
 I'm just anticlimactically
 millenium buggin' out
 standing at the threshold of the future
 staring out at space as my only hope

because
 Generation XTC
 we are the mutant dinosaurs
 jacking off our own evolution
 mutilating our future with our own pollution
 with razor blade X's bleeding every revolution
 dry
 every stroke
 bursting at the seams
 of this pop culture
 so full of shit

pre-printing-press societies. In his attempt to get back to these roots of poetry (as a genre distinct from other types of "writing"), Marc Smith would probably see Homer or Shakespeare as nothing more or less than a product of their audiences. Considering the audiences for text-based poetry versus slam poetry and the rates of poetry publishing/readership, slam represents a return to poetry rooted in its people, with and without the permission of text gatekeepers.

Of course, with such emphasis, form and content of a given poem might differ radically from what came before. The author(s) of Beowulf employed alliteration in part as a mnemonic tool (for practical, not just aesthetic reasons), and similar observations can be made of the slam form, in which poets try to get their messages out in the space of three minutes to avoid overtime point penalties. Beyond aesthetic considerations, slam is concerned (seemingly as a part of its artistic mission) with expanding the audience for poetry despite its cold reception in some quarters, and so there have been slams in prisons (from the Pacific Northwest all the way east and across the Atlantic to the UK), national youth slams since 1997, plus slams in schools, and alternate routes of textual production through self-publishing (that in some cases completely funds tours and helps poets clear small profits) and the creation of independent publishing houses.

At its best, slam aims to return the word to all potential poets and their communities, and maybe that's why such cultural technicians as Bloom are so threatened by slam poetry: it takes them out of the equation and empowers everyone to be a participant, regardless of specialized degrees or published words. Poetry is no longer the domain of specialists or "gifted" bards who can only be understood by the enlightened few; in fact, it never was.

AND NOW, BACK TO THE GAME!

"This game has got to be about more than winning. You're part of something here . . . hundreds of great players . . . you're part of that now." —Tony D'Amato (Al Pacino), Any Given Sunday.

I'm in Providence on Saturday night, August 12, and more than 1,000 have gathered for the finals of the 11th Annual National Poetry Slam. As coach of the first-ever Team San Antonio, I've been running around backstage to get the scoop on claims that one or more members of Team Boston (one of the final four teams) were acquainted with some of their "randomly" picked judges and therefore had an unfair, conscious advantage over their competitors in preliminary and semi-final bouts. The night before, Team San Antonio lost to the Green Mill but finished fifth overall out of the 56 teams competing, and it looks like we might be in finals if Boston is disqualified. The contest began on Wednesday, and I'm running out of energy after sleeping four hours in as many days.

It seems that every year, protests, arguments, and bad blood surround nationals because of various incidences of bad sportsmanship, alleged cheating, and fallout from the competition. The competition brings everyone together and yet divides, though the constant mantra, as always, is: "The points are not the point; the point is poetry." This year seems no different, though it is the first time I've been part of a competing team, and while the intrigues unravel, the individual final contest proceeds on stage with a historic record: The very first white male (Shane Koyczan, from Vancouver, BC) has won the individual championship. It's been a contest historically dominated by females and people of color, such as Patricia Smith, but walls are breaking down every year at Nationals, just as surely as slams have popped up in Europe and this year's contest has drawn poets from three continents. Even the Olympic games have their intrigues, good and bad sports, and yearly draw of athletes looking to break last year's records.

With the end of individual finals, the team-final lineup is decided with the disqualification of Team Boston and substitution of San Antonio, who will go head to head in a regulation four-team bout against Team New York City from Union Square, NYC/Nuyorican Poets Cafe, and NYC/Urbana (based out of CBGB's). I sit off stage in the wings as Team San Antonio slugs it out with all the slam teams in the Big Apple. After a bumpy start during the first two rotations of the contest, San Antonio is ahead of Union Square (due in part to a time penalty against one of their poets) but behind the other teams, yet still within striking distance. Australian Austinite Rich "Rd" Perin performed on point for San Antonio, with Amalia L. Ortiz (my sister) following up as the very first-ever Chicana poet on the finals stage at Nationals. Hip-hop-influenced poet T-Bone and Perin step to the mic next with a duet poem titled "Open Letter to the National Rifle Association," slugging rope-a-dope rhythms with thoroughgoing condemnation for the influence of money in the political process. The crowd erupts with booming chants of "IO! IO! IO! IO! IO!," and the poem scores a perfect cumulative score, the second "group" poem ever to do so at National finals. School teacher Jason "Shaggy" Gossard closes for SA with a critique of slam sportsmanship and the exhortation to step to the mic with affirmation, not negativity.

The dust has settled, and Team San Antonio finishes in 2nd place, ahead of 4th place Union Square and 3rd place Nuyoricans, but losing the 2000 championship to Urbana by one-tenth of a point! The weary crowd of poets and spectators mobs the stage, and though Urbana poets are overjoyed, it seems that San Antonio is making all the noise. I'm elated and exhausted to be here and to see a dream come full circle, to have San Antonio poets finally in the mix of the national slam family and, once unknown, walking with renown and respect for their words. ©

A version of this article appeared in britannica.com in the online "Humanities" section for October 2000.

it's about to snap crackle and pop

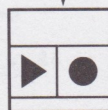
Yes, this pop culture is about to pop
and when stars collapse
they create black holes, dig?
dragging everything down the vortex
spinning through space
like turntable whirling dervish discs
towards that final spot
the singularity
and when this pop culture pops
I'll see you at the singularity
more specifically
I'll be you at the singularity
and you'll be me
and he and she
and all together
we will be
we will be together
at the singularity

Hey, don't mind me
I'm just upgrading my mind
while downloading and downsizing everything
'cuz when this pop culture pops
it will all be flushed down the same cosmic toilet
all the icons and idiots
the slackers and saints
the victims and villains
the hip and the hypocrites
the heroes and the heroine chic
the kitschy, the kinky, the klub kids, the kings,
and the K-martyrs
will all spiral down
toward the event to end all event horizons
the Evil Knievel weeble wobbles ...
but he won't fall down

Hey, don't mind me
I'm just shocking my chakras into submission
becoming chaos theory incarnate
forcing meaning where there is only
forcing meaning where there is only
forcing meaning where there is only

Hey, don't mind me
I'm just break dancing
at the brink of extinction
defending future generation's right
to a-political apathy in orbit
pop culture is about to pop
the future is about to snap
but that's just fine with me you see
because the beat won't stop when
the beat won't stop when
the beat won't stop when
when we do



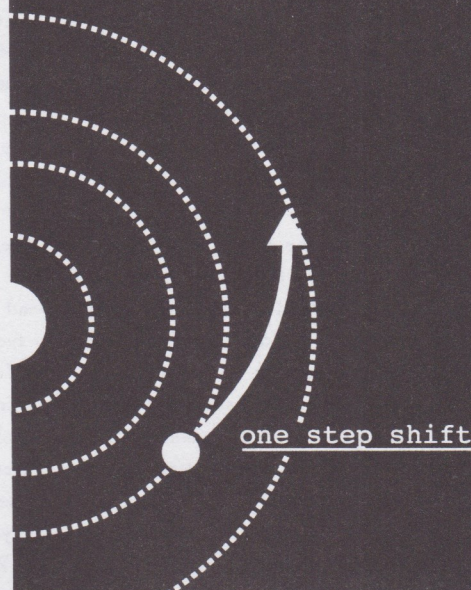


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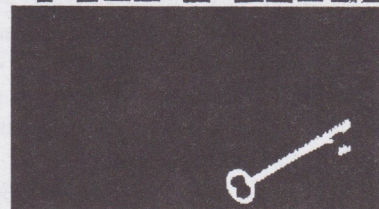
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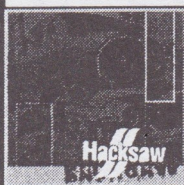
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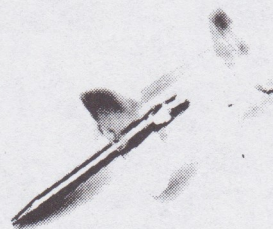
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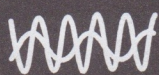
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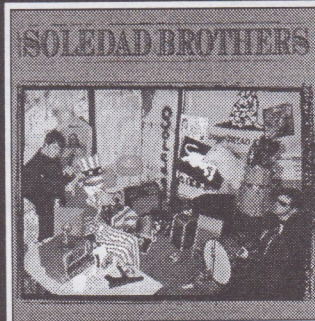
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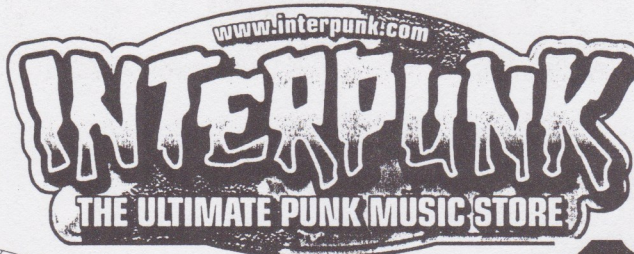
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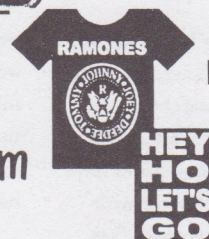
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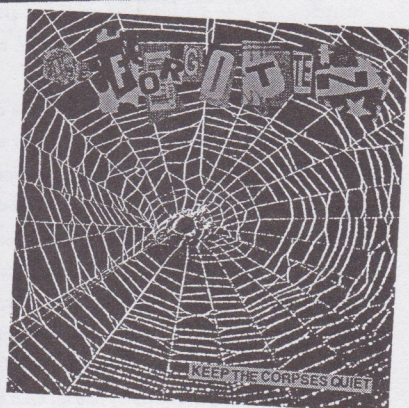
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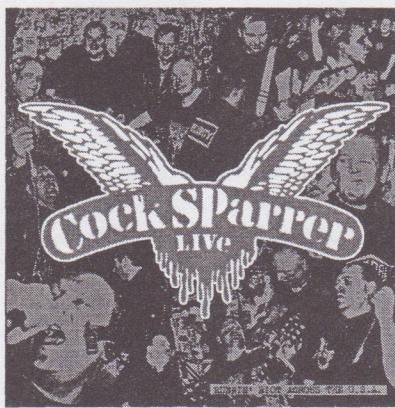


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Ghost Bitch

by John Mancuso

Mr. Reed's fake leg bangs when it hits the cement floor. He paces back and forth, watching Fatima Pires trying to diagram a K-turn on the board. She can't do it. I could have told him that. She won't park a car with anyone. I whisper, "Satan loves you," as she walks back to her seat.

Reed, the kiss ass that he is, keeps a refrigerator in the back of the room filled with Snickers and Butterfingers. Since Fat Enema was the third person who couldn't draw the stupid turn, Reed offers the person who can a free candy bar. I raise my hand, but he calls on Jimmy Davies, the "Best Parallel Parker" in the class. It's more like best parallel porker. So, just as Porker finishes his diagram, I call to Mr. Reed from the refrigerator, holding the empty bag of Snickers (we stole two periods ago), "Hey Mr. Reed, looks like you ate them all already. Too bad, Jimmy."

Garzilli snorts while Reed puffs his cheeks and hobbles toward me, thump-pedee thump, thump-pedee thump. I wave what's left of the plastic sack. He grabs it from me and puts it real close to his face, not giving up that they're hiding somewhere in the empty bag. Porker stays up at the board looking like his puppy got run over. Reed just stands there looking dumb. Garzilli snorts, louder this time, while Porker goes back to his place.

After school, Tim, Kenny, Garzilli, Moochie and me go to Easy Stop. Tim, Moochie and I load our pants with gum, Slim Jims, Cokes and cigars. Meanwhile, Kenny runs into the vault and snags some beers into his coat. Garzilli waits outside

wearing a pair of these ugly looking women's sunglasses he snatched. We all meet, open our beers and cigars and take the trails over to go see Leash. We stop at the clearing for awhile, but it's too cold to hang out there for long.

We go into the back door of Leash's mother's boyfriend's place. Leash sits at a table covered with makeup, boxes of hair dye, empty cigarette packs and overflowing ashtrays. Her friend, Randy, who calls himself Ghost Bitch, sits across from her looking into a makeup mirror. Ghost Bitch can be a freak show. He's a really tall gangly kid who's pretty funny, but he swaggers like a female rubber band. He lives in Providence and dances in drag. The time I saw him he was so wasted that his eyes shrank up like poppy seeds and he ended up kicking over like two tables. Spooky-assed guy.

"Where were you in school today, Tawny-Marie?" I ask her. Leash looks up from her mirror, "Leave me alone, Lex. I had important business to take care of."

She whips her towel off and exposes her hair, purple. The guys ravage the cabinets, opening bags of potato chips and eating cereal out of the box.

Ghost Bitch says, "I did it for her. Do you like it?"

"Looks okay." I walk into the living room to catch up with the guys.

Leash lights a cigarette and screams to me. "Lex, you better control those assholes."

Ghost Bitch and Leash stay in the kitchen. Moochie lights all of Leash's mother's retarded candles: rainbow unicorns and little cheap rip-off Hobbit characters. Kenny finds the original

Hellraiser and asks us if we want to watch it. When he hits the power button, the Home Shopping Club comes on the tv.

Doris the walrus is hocking that cubic zircrappia stuff. Walrus keeps saying, "If you get a busy signal, use Miss Tootie." I say, "Miss Tootie, man, this whole thing is a front for coke."

Two minutes later, it sounds like she shoves some snot back into her nose and says, "Excuse me, I have a cold." And later, when Walrus pitches a mustache trimmer she says, "If you can't get through. Try again using Tootie. Tootie is the only way to go." We roar, the coke theory now confirmed.

Ghost Bitch and Leash break it up: Leash comes in, with full white makeup; Ghost Bitch carries a tray of freshly baked hash brownies. Leash barks: "You assholes, that wax is dripping on my mother's stereo. You better get it off before you leave!" She puts in the movie, and we chow down on the chocolate dope.

The buzz slowly kicks in. They watch the movie. I stare at the dust floating around in the cracks of light from the window. We're all kind of staring, silent. The sun begins setting between the brown and red trees.

The pale sun in fall goes down fast. The day, Halloween nine years ago, going door to door with my father. Before those last flickers of light gave into the darkness, we waded through mountains of dead leaves, my pillowcase filling with jawbreakers and hard candy. Then the red cars and men in black uniforms came to take my father away. It got quieter and quieter, colder and colder. The tiny flame in our jack o lantern stayed alive for those last few hours, burning in vain for the hushed neighborhood. The candy had all been handed

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out and Halloween was over, forever. After that, I was too old to trick or treat.

I say we go outside before the sun sets. Tim, Kenny and Moochie decide to take off. Me, Garzilli, Ghost Bitch and Leash go into the backyard. Leash brings her camera and Ghost Bitch carries all of the makeup. I drown in piles of leaves as Leash takes shot after shot. I make her stand by the tool shed carrying an ax, the light perfectly dim; she looks like the chick on the Black Sabbath album cover, my old beat-off fantasy. Ghost Bitch paints Garzilli's face white and sprays his hair into a mountain. I pour blood capsules on Leash's rabbits and pose like I'm trapped in their cage.

"What are you gonna be for Halloween?" Leash asks as she tries to focus on me swinging upside down from a tree branch.

"HitlerJesusSantaSatan," I tell her.

Across the field, we see her neighbors have built a really cool scarecrow. It's got boots and a cool flannel shirt over a Led Zeppelin concert t-shirt. His carved pumpkin mouth looks like it's screaming in pain. We drop everything and tear up to it. Garzilli's white face pops from behind the hay. He screams, "Mr. Rock and Roll scarecrow can be our Halloween sacrifice."

"Yeah man!" I notice that it's all connected to one pole, making it really easy to steal.

We take different pictures posing with it as the sky becomes totally dark. They form a mini-pyramid with their bodies and I step on Garzilli's back to push the scarecrow over. It's pitch black as we form a line to carry it to the clearing.

We try to stick the scarecrow into the ground, but it doesn't work. The head falls off and when Garzilli kicks it, the pumpkin dents. I get pissed. But it's still gonna be a kick ass Halloween.

...

I'm waiting for Ghost Bitch to drive me, Garzilli and Leash to Hard Times in Onset. When they pull up to my mom's house, Ghost Bitch swaggers out of the car and waves his huge brown sleeves in the air. As I get closer to the car, I see that Ghost Bitch has on a long brown wig, and that his cheeks have huge slatherings of pink on them.

His keys hit me in the shoulder, "You can drive, sugar."

I open a door to the smoke filled car. Metallica blares. Leash, wrapped in leopard fur and the fake white wig, puts on pink lipstick; she balances a mirror with lines on it and bends over to kiss me. Garzilli stays hunched in the corner. While I put the car in reverse, Ghost Bitch says, "I'm gonna win us a hundred dollars tonight. Hard Times is having a Boy George look alike contest. Don't I look fierce?" Leash feeds me a line, and another. Off we go.

The dick won't let us into the club. I knew it, so I'm not that pissed. I tell Garzilli to cruise the alley; lots of kids were hanging around a fire they built in the trash can. When I was fourteen, I hitched a ride here and met this chick Michelle in that alley. She knew these guys in a band who lived in this cool warehouse building that had a huge elevator in it. We all went back and partied, and she and I squatted there for like three days, fucking and tripping on fifty-cent hits of acid. Two weeks later, she was on the news for killing her Grandfather by spraying insecticide in his face and chopping him up. They said it was one of the grisliest crimes in the history of Cape Cod. Those were fun days. I didn't tell Garzilli, Leash, or anybody about the murder, though. No way. Only an asshole would think that's cool.

Just when we get rid of Garzilli, and

me and Leash start to get down, Ghost Bitch bangs on the windows, screaming, "Open up!"

He's pissed. Only Leash knows how to talk to the guy. So, he starts rambling to her about some guy who owed him money, or some bullshit. He shines his headlights in the alley and packs of goth kids flip us off. I roll down the window and scream for Garzilli. We don't see him.

Ghost Bitch hauls it into reverse, "I don't have time for this shit."

As we tear out of there, Ghost Bitch tells us we were too late for the contest. He drives like a maniac all the way back. When we get close to home, I realize somebody has been following us. Going down the muddy road toward the clearing, he takes a corner too fast and flies into the pond side of the clearing. We're totally stuck. Ghost Bitch gets out and goes ballistic, hitting trees and crying. He tells us we cannot call the cops because he's drunk.

The scene floods with light. Ghost Bitch screams. A pickup comes to a screeching halt. Ghost Bitch tries to scream again, but chokes and runs. A guy jumps out with a rifle and takes off after him. ©

(To be continued in next issue.)

Currently, John Mancuso is in the process of trying to publish his first novel, *Harmony Slopes*, in which "Ghost Bitch" is a chapter. Another chapter of the manuscript, entitled "Corroded Crown," appeared in the Summer 1999 issue of *Fourteen Hills*. He is an Instructor of Literature and Composition at the Art Institute of Philadelphia. John welcomes comments at sonicboat@mindspring.com

The *Deprivers Project* book, *The Touch*, which I plugged in the last issue, is out, and it's really cool. Check it out at www.deprivers.com. Look for it in your local independent bookstore.

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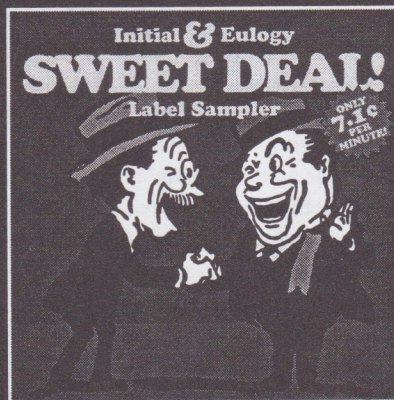


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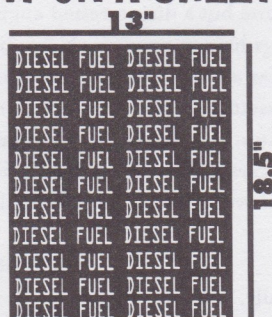
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How to Tape a Live Show

By Chris Ziegler

Punk is music best experienced live—"consumed on the premises," as *Slash* magazine's Claude Bessy put it. When you listen to records and CDs, you're not hearing the sing-alongs, the heckling, the hilarious mishaps and the energetic mayhem that makes a show worth going to—you're hearing nervous kids playing in a sterile room filled with microphones and mixing boards, with no one but a disinterested engineer watching. Studio recordings have their place, but a studio recording isn't the only way to hear a band. Passable recordings can be made with only a single cassette recorder, but with some equipment and some preparation, you can capture that energy and live experience and, if you're careful, end up with a recording that'll stand up to anything that ever strutted out of a studio.

Equipment

Ideally, you want to tape shows with a multitrack recorder—something that lets you keep each instrument from getting lost in the mess. But this can be an expensive option, so we'll work our way up from the bottom.

Cassette recorders might be slowly going extinct, but they're still the cheapest option going—from \$30 to maybe \$100 or so. If you need to use a portable cassette recorder, look for one that has some sort of microphone jack and headphone jack (a jack is a place to plug something in) and, if possible, allows you to adjust the input levels (to prevent sound overloading the unit or being hidden under tape hiss). If the recorder is designed for executives to record memos, it's probably not going to cope so well when some power-violence band starts peeling the paint off the walls. Tape decks (and multitrack systems using cassettes) should also be cleaned and demagnetized (easy to do with special tapes available everywhere) before shows, to minimize tape hiss. And remember, analog cassettes—especially cheap ones—decay slightly in quality every time they're played.

Portable digital recorders offer better sound quality but, of course, they're more expensive—around \$150 to \$300. MiniDisc recorders are supplanting pricy DAT recorders—they're small, they can record up to 80 uninterrupted stereo minutes (as opposed to around 45 or 50 on a cassette), many units allow input adjustment and external mics and the like, and they can be transferred to a computer for post-processing later. Sharp and Sony units seem to be pretty popular, but check www.minidisc.org for overviews of many different recorders.

Both of the above options are fine—you can just plug a mic in and start taping—but using your recorder as a base, you can make a makeshift multitrack recording system using a **mixer**. If you

add a 4-, 8- or more-channel mixer (not a DJ-turntable mixer, which is designed for something different) to a conventional tape deck or MiniDisc recorder, you can combine 4, 8 or more different sound sources into one balanced signal. You'll be able to mic onstage instruments as if you had a real multitrack recorder, which gives you a better shot at a nicely balanced tape. Pay close attention to what you're hearing through those headphones, though, because unlike a multitrack system, you won't be able to remix later. What you hear is what you get.

For serious live recording, real **multitrack system**—digital or analog—is the way to go. A multitrack system like a 4-track or 8-track allows you to record several instruments on separate tracks and adjust them later to finalize the recording—note, however, that many 8-track systems record only 4 tracks simultaneously. Digital multitrack systems start at around \$400-\$500, while cassette 4-tracks can be had new for around \$200 and used for as little as half that. Cassette multitracks (like the ubiquitous Tascam units) use high-speed recording, which gives you better quality, but limits your tape time (sometimes to as little as 15 minutes worth). MiniDisc recorders use high-grade data MiniDiscs that can record up to 37 minutes worth of audio per disc (in multiple tracks, however). Super high-end digital hard-disk recorders can handle over an hour of 8 simultaneously recorded tracks, but also run in the neighborhood of \$1000. Pretty expensive, eh? A way to do (kinda) 8-track recording on the cheap is to use a cheap 4-channel mixer to handle all the drum mics, which you'll then plug in to one track of your 4-track, leaving 3 tracks for bass, guitar and vocals or whatever.

The **microphones** you typically see at shows (you know, that look like ice-cream cones) are usually *cardioid* mics, which pick up sound in a roughly heart-shaped pattern concentrated in front of them and to the immediate sides. These will work fine for live recording—basically point them in the direction of what you want recorded. Omnidirectional or binaural mics are commonly used when you need tiny, concealable mics, or when you'll be close to a good sound source because they pick up sound from all directions, like your ears do, not from one direction like a cardioid mic.

You can record with one mic, but more is better—even two mics is a vast improvement (because it's stereo instead of mono). With multitrack recording, you need at the very least four to six mics. Mics can cost from \$20 at a pawn shop to \$50 or \$100 new (of course, mics can cost much more than that, but spending \$10,000 on a mic isn't really our focus here, now is it?). Good mid-range mics can be had for around \$40-\$70.

As for **recording media**, spare no expense. Tapers prefer Maxell XL II tapes (the expensive solid gray ones) or TDK SA tapes. With cassettes, it is important to use quality media, as inferior tapes may not pick up as wide a range of sound, may distort more easily, or even snap. Also, try not to use anything longer than a 90 or 100 minute tape, as these are built with especially thin tapes that are especially prone to snapping. With digital media, JVC, TDK and Sony discs are reputedly solid.

A good, tight, loud pair of **headphones** is paramount, so you can monitor what you're recording. Get some that fit completely over your ears—between \$20 and \$50 or more for super-quality stuff. If you anticipate a lot of clandestine taping, try and get something that will block as much outside noise as possible—and plan on wearing a lot of hats.

Cables and adapters: the three-pronged connector on the end of a microphone is an XLR connector; these usually also appear on professional mixing boards and PAs. Most input jacks on cheap recording equipment are 1/8 in jacks (like the plug on the end of your Walkman headphones) or 1/4 in (like the end of your guitar cord), though more heavy-duty equipment may have XLR jacks. It's pretty easy to connect anything with one of these three to anything else with proper adaptors from Radio Shack. There is minor signal loss when you do this, but it's not worth too much worry. Also have an assortment of splitters—little triangular pieces that let you plug two mics into one jack, so you can exponentially expand the capabilities of your equipment.

When buying all of this stuff, be careful of used equipment—it may be worth a little extra money to have a deck that won't mysteriously start shredding your tapes.

Preparation

Show up early with your equipment. If it's a DIY show, you shouldn't have a problem with people allowing you to tape, but you also shouldn't be sneaking stuff in and should let the band and the venue know what you're going to do—get permission from the band, at least, since it's their music you're documenting. If you're multitracking, find a place as far away from the band as your cables will allow, to minimize noise bleeding over, and out of the way of any particular enthusiastic dancing, to keep you and your equipment in good working order. Make sure you have extra batteries (and put fresh batteries in before you go), extra tapes or discs, and more cables and adaptors than you think you'll need. Also make sure you've cleaned and demagnetized your tape decks.

If you have only one microphone, see "taping." If you have two running through a splitter, use what tapers call the 3:1 rule to get a good stereo effect: there should be three times the distance between the mics than there is from the mic to the stage: if you're standing ten feet back, your microphones should be 15 feet on

either side of you—a total of 30 feet apart, or 3 x 10. In theory, this will give you a much more even coverage of the sound. Also, if you're using one or two mics, put them up high (on stands if possible) so they aren't bumped into or muffled by the crowd.

If you're multitracking, you should have at least four mics and one splitter. Put one mic in front of the guitar amp, one in front of the bass amp and two on the drums: one close to the snare and below the hi-hat and one in front of the bass drum, running through the splitter. With this set-up, you'll get at least the basic sound of the show. Generally, running basses and guitars right into your recorder provides a very clean, almost too-clean sound—micing an amp is much closer to the way the show really sounds. Cymbals are loud enough to take care of themselves, usually, and micing toms is a luxury—if you have tracks and mics enough, put them near the floor tom and rack toms. The key to mic placement is maximizing separation, so when you play back your tracks, there's mostly bass with a little guitar and drums on the bass track, mostly guitar on the guitar track, etc.—it's particularly tricky with the drum kit. This is where the nice headphones come in—you'll be able to check exactly what each track is picking up.

If at all possible, run the vocals directly off the PA—it should have a jack labeled "line out" or something—and into your recorder. If you can't use the PA for recording for some reason (typical big-club sound-jerk behavior, perhaps), then you'll need another mic, which you'll have to put near one of the speakers being used for vocals and which is a much less desirable tactic. If you have an extra XLR splitter, you'll be able to plug your recorder right into the back of the onstage microphone. The principle is the same for keyboards and similar instruments—like vocals, they tend to get lost in the mix, so tape them directly off the PA, if possible. If you're a real audio-monster, look into limiters, which, if you know what you're doing (and if you don't, there are books beyond the scope of this article that will teach you), you can prevent any signals from going to high and fuzzing out your tape.

Always use foam-rubber mic "condoms" to take the edge off any saturation and distortion and do a test recording before starting, in case you have a bum cord or something. When you start taping, never use Dolby noise reduction or any other filters that modify the signal. You want a pure, basic tape of the show—you can work on modifying it later. Don't try and clean up the sound at the show because if you screw up, it's a lot harder to repair the damage.

Taping

If you're using only one microphone, whether built-in or plugged in, the quality of your tape is going to depend very much on the quality of the sound at the show. You'll have to use your position in the audience as a mixer. If it's a typical punk show,

the vocals will be the only instrument that gets miced. Stand near a speaker so you don't miss out. Otherwise, stay somewhere in the center and back. Keep your mics above shoulder level, if possible; bodies and air both muffle sound, but bodies also tend to bump microphones. If you can use a splitter and two mics, try and point them leftward and rightward to approximate a stereo effect—anything from tiny binaural mics taped to either side of your glasses to the 3:1 set-up above will help.

If you're multitracking, squeeze those headphones on tight and keep an eye on the glowing LEDs that signal rock 'n' roll overload. If you're just using a mixer and a recording deck, try and get the band to soundcheck—or failing that, pick levels for each track that aren't too high—around 2/3 of maximum is what many tapers recommend, adjusted for anything you can hear is coming in too loud or too quietly—and cross your fingers. Multitrackers, don't adjust the levels unless you really need to—record everything at constant levels, set low enough to minimize overload (but high enough to actually record the show—again, 2/3 seems to be a good compromise), which leads to distortion and fuzz on your final recording. Keep an ear on your separation. If possible, make sure the singer is far enough out front to not pick up too much drum sound and centered enough to not pick up any amps. Watch out for hum created by something not being grounded or being broken, and, of course, keep an eye on your set-up. As people thrash and roll around on stage, mics do get knocked over. If you're going for a Germs-live-at-the-Whisky-1979 effect, then just let the tape roll. But if you're going for a Weezer-live-in-Köln-1996 effect, you may want to get somebody to pick stuff back up for you. Don't overcorrect—let the machines do their work, and you'll get to abuse the tape later.

Sometimes, it's possible to tape a show "off the boards," a situation in which a nice soundperson lets you plug your recorder right into an output jack on the venue's PA. Only do this if every instrument is being run through the PA and there's a good mix of sound, otherwise it's best to just run vocals off the board. This can leave you with a great tape or a horrible (but clean) tape—you're at the recording mercy of the soundperson, who will mix the show how he or she likes, may not have checked their equipment as carefully as you did your own, and may not care as much about the band as you. Ever see a band pleading to have something turned up or down on stage? Maybe you don't want that recording to listen to—so do it yourself. Also, keep in mind that the mix through the PA is supposed to complement the live sound, not serve as a representation of it. If you can use splitters to get the signals coming straight into the PA also going straight into your multitrack or mixer, you can mix the show yourself for a better recording.

After the show, stop and eject the tape and put it somewhere

safe—don't listen to it until you get home, lest in the excitement you hit a button you didn't want to hit. Pack up your recorder and mics and cables and thank the sound people if they were helpful, the venue and the band, whom you should be sending a tape. If they let you tape them, it's the least you can do, and who knows? If you did a good job, maybe a track or two will end up on a compilation or something.

Postproduction

Once you've mixed your tape down the way you want it on your multitrack or once you've got a single-track recording that's almost ready to go, you can digitize the entire show and edit it not quite to perfection. A Macintosh has a built-in 1/8-in jack on the back—while it's not ideal for audio, it will do the job with gusto as long as your input signal isn't too loud. Connect it to your recorder or stereo and don't make it too loud—the input software should allow you to amplify the signal as it enters the computer. What's that magic number? 2/3 or so on the computer's level monitors will do just fine—you can always amplify it digitally. A PC will require at least a 16-bit (CD quality) soundcard—shop around; try online price indexes like streetprices.com to find cheapies, and look for both audio-in (sampling) and audio-out. You may want to get quality speakers, or if you have a good stereo, you can just run the computer through that. High-end audio-editing packages like SAW Plus for the PC and ProTools for the Mac can reportedly work miracles, from pulling out tape hiss and white noise to correcting pops and spikes, bringing up faint instruments and muffling too strong ones. Of course, these usually cost hundreds of dollars (although Digidesign offers a FREE—you read that correctly—software-only version of ProTools at www.digidesign.com). Cheaper programs like SoundEdit16 by Macromedia for the Mac allow rudimentary equalizing (adding bass and treble, etc.) and when combined with de-noising software like Arboretum's RayGun or the PC's Sound Laundry can still turn out respectable effects.

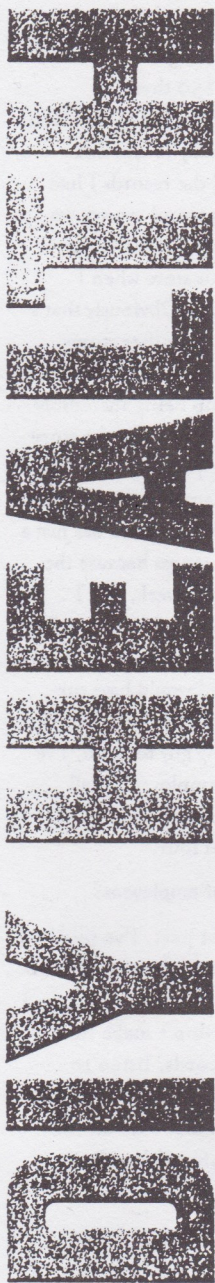
Resources

For additional information, check out websites like www.bootlegs.com or www.resourcesfortapers.com, both of which offer valuable help for the beginning taper. Newsgroups like alt.music.bootlegs or alt.music.4-track and the DAT-Heads mailing list are rife with experienced tapers willing to help out novices, as long as you're willing to overlook lots of references to Phish and the Dead. There are lots of tape-trading network websites available as well, with a little searching—because once you've got a few good live tapes of your own, you can start trading them with other people and building up your own collection of music, recorded the way it was supposed to be heard. ☺

in sickness and no wealth

Skincare 2

by Angel Page



Since last issue I told you about all kinds of scary skin diseases and how to treat them, I thought it would be fun to talk about all the wonderful things you can do for your skin when it's *not* breaking out in rashes or doing other gross things. I want to share some recipes for homemade skin products. If you treat your skin well, it will treat *you* well too!

Cold Cream

First: Put 5-grams/1/2 ounce of beeswax into a glass bowl/coffee cup, and then pour in 20-ml/4 fl oz. Of almond oil.

Second: Place the bowl/coffee cup in a pan of water (the idea is to make a double boiler), over gentle heat and mix until the ingredients are melted together.

Third step: Warm 2-fl oz./50 ml. of rose water (found at health food stores), in a second bowl or jar, and then add to the wax/oil mixture bit by bit, mixing all the time.

Fourth: Finally, stir in the essential oil, transfer the mixture to a jar, and put into the refrigerator to set before using.

Simple Clay Mask

2-3 drops of your choice of essential oil, and mix with 2 tbsp. of wet clay paste, (found at health food stores. You may have to buy the powder and add enough water to make a paste).

Apply to your face and wait 10-30 minutes. Rinse with warm water.

Banana Mask

Mash 1/2 banana and add 1 tsp. of honey, and 2 tsp. of sour cream. Apply to face and let it set for about 10 minutes. Gently wipe it off with a damp wash cloth.

Avocado Mask

Mash half of an avocado and apply to entire face. Let it set for about 20 minutes and then gently wipe it off with a damp wash cloth.

Blackhead Scrub

To loosen blackheads, combine equal parts baking soda and water in your hand and rub gently on your skin for 2-3 min. Rinse with warm water.

Honey for the Skin

Believe it or not, I just apply honey straight onto my skin—honey is so good for it! Rich in antioxidant, antibiotic and antiviral capabilities, it shows great promise as a skin moisturizer. Not only does it help retain moisture; it resembles the skin's natural moisturizing factor as well. It's especially great during the winter. You know how your skin gets dry and flaky, and you may use a scrubber/loofah, but that can make it worse? I just slather on some honey, and it takes care of the dry, flaky skin. No need to damage the skin with scrubbers, and extra moisturizer that make your face break out. I use this concoction all the time; it's a favorite of mine.

Please feel free to write me with any questions or concerns: Angel Page c/o Makoto Recordings PO Box 50403, Kalamazoo, MI 49005 or via e-mail at: angelpage@hotmail.com

PLEASE NOTE: I am not a Doctor or Licensed Herbalist, so please use the recipes, advice and other information here at your own risk. If you are nursing or pregnant, do not use any herbs or supplements without supervision from your midwife, herbalist or doctor.

punk 101

The Fine Art of Browsing

by James Squeaky



At twenty-eight years old, Michael Ismerio has accomplished more interesting things than most people accomplish in a lifetime. He plays in an Old Time string music band, The Dickel Brothers, that play traditional songs from the '20s and '30s and has two albums out on Empty Records. He produces a fantastic personal zine about travel called *Grundig*. He also owns and runs the only record store in Portland that specializes in used vinyl. His small store, Q is for Choir, is located on Clinton Street in Portland's super-hip Southeast district. Here people meet to thumb through Michael's eclectic record selection, read through and purchase zines, check the community bulletin board for shows at the various punk houses, and drink tea with Michael, who is definitely the most personable record store owner I have ever met.

How long have you lived in Portland and how long have you had the store? Did you move here specifically to open the store?

In the early '90s, I was living in California and working at a small record store. One day I got the idea, "I could do this, this is easy" and decided that I was going to move to Seattle and open a record store. I started making trips up to Seattle to check out all the record stores up there and found myself hating them all. I just couldn't find a single record store that I liked—since then I've found good ones, but it was pretty desolate back then. By the third trip, I was convinced that I would be happier living in Portland. Even though Portland already had a ton of amazing record stores, I just figured they could use one more. I moved here in 1994 and then opened up Q is for Choir in 1995.

It seems that it would take a lot of capital to open a record store. How did you get it started? Did you have some money saved?

When I got the idea, I started telling everyone I knew that I was going to open a record store. No one believed me, but every once in a while someone would let me buy their whole record collection off of them a little

bit at a time. I'd also yard sale and go to thrift stores—just anywhere I could find records. I was spending \$20 here and \$50 there on records over the course of three and a half years. I moved to Portland, kept buying records and yard sale-ing, and eventually found this space. ¶ I was able to open Q is for Choir with all the records I had collected and stockpiled. All I ended up having to spend money on was the first months' rent and the wood to build the record racks, which I built myself. The money I had put into this store when I opened it was ridiculously small—like \$2000 or less. Obviously that's fairly unique for a record store. ¶ The main cost that other stores have to deal with is filling a store, even a small store, with new vinyl or CDs. The mark-up is not very much and it ends up being incredibly expensive. Most record stores dump a whole lot of cash into the store at the very beginning and then spend the next five years trying to pay it back. ¶ When I originally started this place, I shared the space with a guy that did body-piercing in the back half of the store—there was just a curtain dividing us. This arrangement really saved my ass because the first year and a half I was here, he worked three days a week, and I worked the other four. I didn't have to pay anyone to work for me. He sold my records when he was here and I'd sell his jewelry when I was here. If that situation hadn't existed, there's no way I would have survived because I wouldn't have been able to pay employees back then. ¶ In the three and a half years since the body-piercing guy took off, I've ebbed and flowed through having and not having employees. It all depends on if I have money to pay someone to work for me. Sometimes I work seven days a week and sometimes four.

What kind of arrangements do you make with your employees?

I pay them hourly under the table. For the most part, I've just had friends working for me. Something that I've always been aware of is that I don't want to be a boss. I've dealt with that by expecting the people who work for me to do very little. I don't make them do anything—just hang out in the store, sell records, listen to music, read zines, sell records and keep the store open. I've made the store so that it's pretty much dependent on me. I do all the work that needs to be done. I've never felt comfortable piling work on people who are making minimum wage.

What is your ultimate goal of the store?

The "business" goal is to be self-sufficient and provide several people with a living wage. Culturally, I try to make the store a bit of a community center. There's a lot of people who come here on a regular basis to post flyers, check in, and feel a part of the community. A lot of the times I feel like a community bulletin board myself because I'm constantly passing on information. ¶ A lot of the people who have worked here over the years probably wouldn't want to put in the energy it would take to really get this store running well. I've been building a plan for the last two years of trying to turn this place into a co-op. I've reached the point where it's way too much

work for me to do alone. I've been trying to find the right people who would really want to invest in the store and make it theirs.

How would you make that arrangement when you've already put so much time and energy into the store?

After researching it, there is a way that makes the most sense to me. Basically, a co-op of three or four people—one of who would be me—would form. This co-op would then buy the store off of me. Once I sold off the store, I would have no more legal rights to it then any of the other people involved. I would be compensated by selling the store, then would step into the group that bought it. I'd still be working here and still have a part in the day-to-day team, but I wouldn't have more say then the other people. The tricky part is finding the right people. Realistically, I'm only going to get one shot at making it work. If it doesn't, that would probably be the end of the store.

That's got to be hard in Portland when it's such a transient city.

That's the problem—I've found a lot of really great people that would love to be a part of this, but none of those people can guarantee that they'll be here in a year. It would take a year for me just to really teach someone how to run this place.

How do you see yourself fitting in amongst all the other "cool" record stores in Portland? What sets you apart? Do you feel like you are in competition with the other stores?

That's not really something I think about. In fact, another punk store [Green Noise] just moved in right across the street. Everyone keeps trying to goad me into reacting to Green Noise, asking me "Aren't you kind of mad that he's stepping on your territory?" I don't even let myself think that way. I don't think of it as *anyone's* territory. I don't own this neighborhood. So far there's enough differences between our stores that it's not "the same store across the street." ¶ When I first opened this store, there was another store that dealt primarily with punk records, which I do very little of. The store was called Roundhouse and was owned by a nice guy named Pete who's now up in Seattle and owns Singles Going Steady. I moved to Portland with a whole van full of records that I had been stockpiling for years. I had quite a bit of punk stuff amongst that which I had no idea what any of it was or was worth. I didn't know Pete, but a couple of weeks before I opened, I boxed up all the punk stuff I had and didn't know what to do with and brought them over to Roundhouse and introduced myself. I said, "Hey, I'm opening up a record store about 15 blocks away and I have all these punk records and I was wondering if you could tell me what they're worth." He just looked at me like, "Are you serious?!" He was probably thinking, "Here's this guy who is potentially competition asking me what his records are worth." But he was super nice about it and was happy to help me out. For years, whenever I had punk stuff I'd take it over to him and he'd tell me what to sell it for.

What would you say you specialize in? Where's your main interest?

Used vinyl. I don't like the idea of focusing on one thing because then people won't bring in other kinds of records. If I only specialized in punk, then people would only bring in punk all the time. People wouldn't come here if they didn't think I sold the type of records they're looking for. I have a lot of folk and jazz records—probably much more than punk. My tastes aren't specialized. I don't just listen to one kind of music and I don't want the store to be filled with one type of music.

One thing I've noticed about your store that really sets you apart from the other stores in Portland is your large zine selection. What is the importance of carrying zines to you?

First of all, I have been doing a zine [Grundig] for four years now, so that's made me really passionate about zines. Back when I started, there was really only one place in town that sold zines [Reading Frenzy], which is my favorite store in the whole country. ¶ For the first couple of years I wished that I could sell zines, but for some reason I didn't think I could. One day I just decided to build a little zine rack and started selling zines here—they did very well. Reading Frenzy is on the opposite side of the river from me and so it was convenient for people to come over here and get zines instead of crossing the river. Also, the fact that there's so many millions of zines out there that people are doing, I was able to find zines that didn't end up at Reading Frenzy. It made for a more varied selection in Portland overall. Now I have three zine racks.

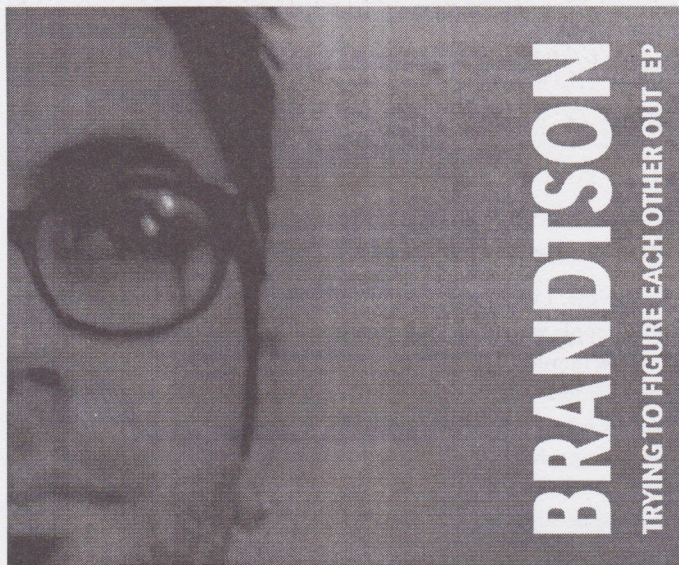
What do you find most challenging about running Q is for Choir?

Committing myself to it. In this day and age there is just so much going on—so many distractions. Everyone has a million amazing projects. The hardest part is just sticking to my own project and not running off every time someone else has something going on that I think I would like to be a part of—playing music especially. It's gotten to the point where I actually make more money playing music then I do here in the store. It's gotten hard for me to not just run off and go play music full time. There are so many other things I could possibly be doing.

So, what keeps you here?

I know that if I stick with it, eventually I can get the store to where it's supporting itself and doesn't need me as much. I believe that eventually I'll be able to leave knowing that the store will still be here running when I return. ¶ Community is important to me. I'm intrigued by being part of a community and watching it change and grow. So, as much as I love exploring other people's worlds and communities, I don't want to just abandon mine every time I see someone else's community that seems impressive or amazing. ©

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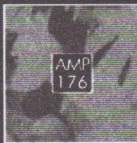
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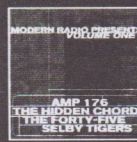
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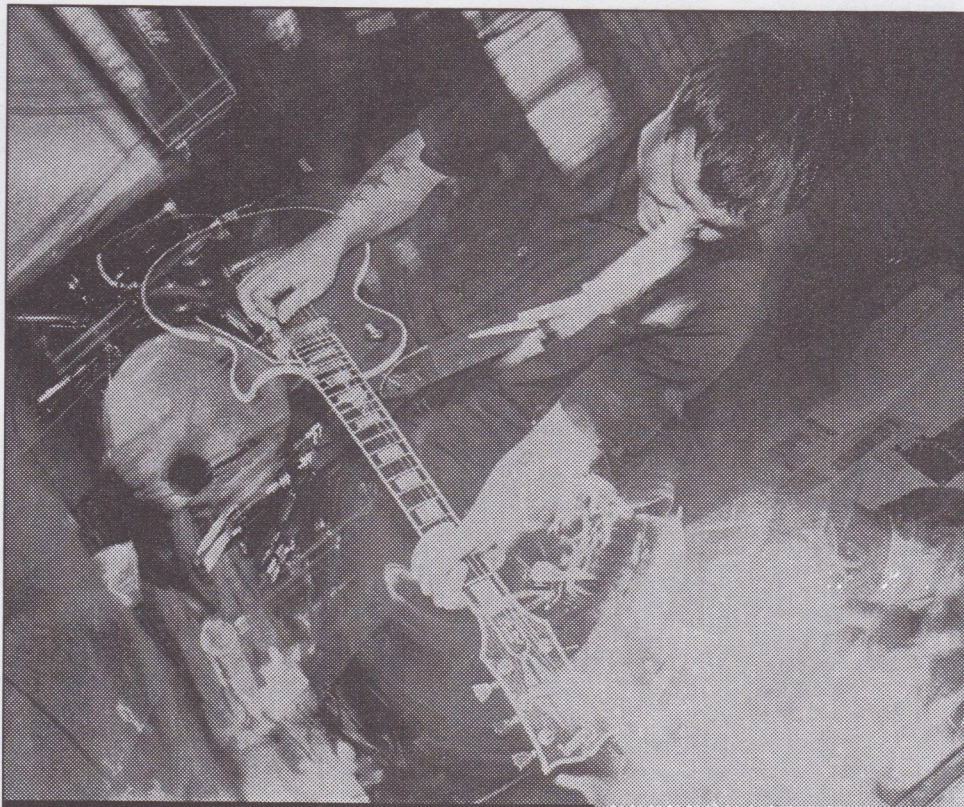
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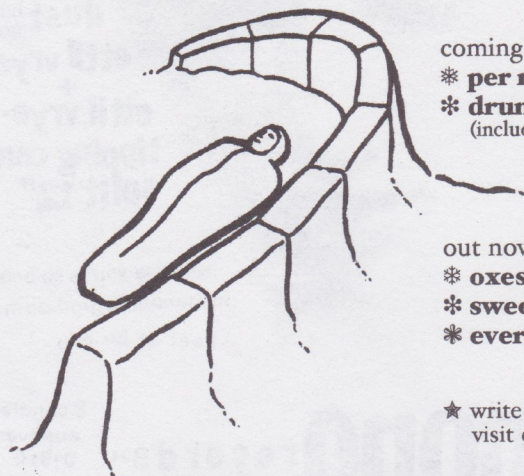
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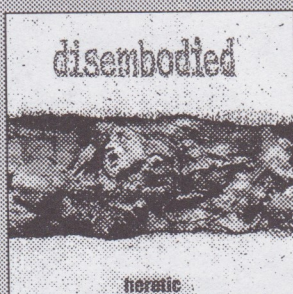
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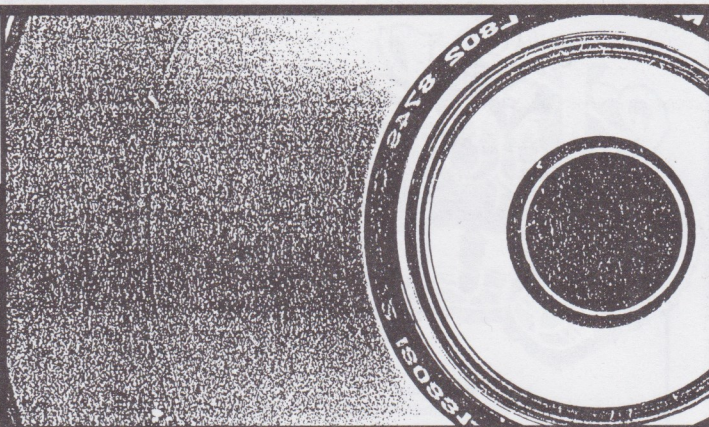
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PLASTIC MUSIC



BIRDSONGS OF THE MESOZOIC - PETROPHONICS, CD

This is quite the surprise to review. This collective of musicians has been making music of the experimental/ avant-garde persuasion for the last 20 years if I'm not mistaken. Petrophonics is a incredible and crisp recording of jazz, rock and sound exploration. This is all quite controlled and is similar to a soundtrack of a dreamscape at times. Each song is a journey or a theme that just creates an amazing visual if you take the time to take in the music for what it's worth. Birdsongs is made up of a guitarist, a horn player (alto/ soprano sax, flute) who also does percussion at times, an acoustic pianist, and a synthesizer player. The four members are responsible for quite a bit of the music but get the assistance from six other players throughout the album. Simply amazing to say the least. Petrophonics is a real easy album to get into, unlike other albums that may fall under the "experimental" genre. However, this is definitely not for the punk rock fans that just like the basic guitar, bass, drums, vocals combination. This is for those willing to give non-traditional "music" a chance. Maybe the kids who like Iceburn's jazz stuff may dig this... (DM)

BLONDE REDHEAD, MELODIE CITRONIQUE CD

Blonde Redhead has received a lot of attention lately, with a well received new album and a touring slot with the Red Hot Chili Peppers, it seems like Blonde Redhead can do no wrong. With this new five song EP they show no sign of slowing down. Blonde Redhead have an interesting and sound, somewhat like Sonic Youth crossed with Stereolab. Angelic Female vocals hover over dissonant

guitars and irregular rhythms, creating a sound which depending on your inclinations, can be either viewed as hauntingly beautiful post punk experimentation or pretentious artsy fartsy hipster noodling. While I don't usually have a problem with bands who come from the more experimental and pretentious end of the punk rock post punk spectrum, for some reason, Blonde Redhead just don't sit well with me. To me they seem to be pretentious for the sake of being pretentious, as though they are trying to impress music reviewers who seem to go ape shit for this kind of stuff. I don't know, maybe I'm jaded, but it seems like there have just been way too many bands treading this same ground lately, and many who have done it better. This isn't too say that Blonde Redhead is crap, just maybe a little overrated. Basically, if you like this band, you will like this CD, and if not, it won't change your mind. (JK)

THE BLOOD BROTHERS- THIS ADULTERY IS RIPE, CD

This disc took me by surprise. I will be the first to admit that I have become jaded in my late twenties. I think that I have heard the best of the best and now all of the new stuff just didn't seem to have the same feel. Well I was wrong (thank god!). This band "Blood Brothers" seems to know what is good about freaky punk rock and roll. They take elements from Jesus Lizard, Fugazi, and all the angry hardcore and emo bands in the world (I think they do at least.) From the opening of the first song Rescue you think that you are in for another basic screaming punk band, but then this second voice comes in and mixes things up. The two front man idea works very well in this band. Their two voices combine

6 GIG- TINCAN EXPERIMENT, CD

Well (too much?) produced mid tempo heavy music from 6 gig. 12 songs that compliment the range of the band (BC)

Ultimatum Music LLC 8723 W. Washington Blvd. Culver City, CA. 90232

AFI - "THE ART OF DROWNING", CD

How did these freaks squeak a goth aesthetic past the hardcore congressional oversight committee? You can go to a hardcore show now and see youth crew shouts purging forth from pasty-white faces with black lipstick. Vinyl pants in the pit? Ps - This is band blows. (RB)

Nitro Records

ALL BETS OFF/THE CONTRADICTIONS, SPLIT 7"

Two rockin' songs each from these Bay Area punk bands. The note on the sleeve is pretty cool: "Thanks to AFI and eBay because this release was financed by selling old AFI merch on eBay at obscene prices. Suckers."

Contradictions, 2280 Octavia, San Francisco, CA 94109, All Bets Off, PBM 121, San Francisco, CA 94117

ANALENA- A RHYTHMETICS, 7"

This 4-song 7-inch is a great way too familiar yourself with this female fronted Croatian band. Sometimes intense, sometimes melodic rock from a land that being a "punk" means a lot more than wearing an Earth Crisis T-shirt. (BC)

Get-Off Fallervo Setaliste 39, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia 385 1 3022 273

THE ANASAZI - S/T, CD

The beginning of this ten song CD sounded like a combination of spooky Halloween music and a chainsaw over metal. It then erupted into a frantic, scream song that I could barely hear. Thinking that maybe that was just the first song, I skipped ahead.. but still, the sound was extremely poor. I'm not sure if this was recorded in a tin can, or if this barely audible vocals thing was done on purpose. Mostly, all I could decipher is that it's fast, has lots of feedback, and is sort of similar to the Locust plus eerie video game and Halloween-like sound effects. (ES)

no contact info given except this email address -anasazi666@onebox.com

THE APES - LOVE IS REAL, 7"

Fun goof record by a bunch of kids who think that new wave was REALLY funny. The B-side is the better of the two songs, with a cool organ line. (AE)

Glove Music, PO Box 4803, Washington, D.C. 20008

ASSNIPPLE - "YOUR BAND SUCKS", 7"

This flock of metal retards consists of a singer who wishes he were Dr. Know and an attitude that they're the best thing around. Pompousness with absolutely no redeeming qualities. (RB)

Subverziek

AWKWARD THOUGH - MAYDAY, CD

Bland, political hardcore punk, New York style. This is about 7 songs too long as well. This music is disposable and not worth the money spent on it. (RE)

Blackout Records, PO Box 1575 NYC, NY 10009

B MOVIE RATS - "BAD FOR YOU", CD

Hail hail rock'n'roll and god forbid don't respect the

About our new review section: We still review all the records we receive, but we only give longform reviews to records our review staff decides they want to highlight. That doesn't mean the ones that get short reviews aren't worthy, just that the reviewer decided that they could write about another record better. Also, we now give each reviewer a "spotlight" section, where they can write about an old album they really liked and write about what they're currently listening to. Finally, if a reviewer doesn't like it, you don't. It's not institutional policy that your record is good or that it's bad, it's just one reviewer's opinion—so don't freak out. We're sure you put a good deal of work into your project, and that alone is certainly worth some congratulations! But please, if you're pissed at a review, remember: it's not Punk Planet, it's just one reviewer.

for one psycho sound. The bands music is intense and never lets you get too comfortable with a sound for long. All of the songs are interesting and well worth a listen or two...or three to. Get this and be entertained. (BC)

BOOKS LIE-ITS A WEAPON CD

This is the only CD I got this month that I can honestly recommend. That's OK since this is a soon to be classic that you can throw on repeat and be pleased with for days. There is nothing about this New York City Hardcore band that is not exceptional. A crude description would be to cross of Econochrist with Kid Dynamite. The Books Lie folks have stolen riffs from far and wide to bring you a quirky cool new style that is super catchy without being bogged down in experimental bullshit. I caught many influences in the guitars from Teengenerate to The B52s. These guys (and a girl) remind me of the passion and hostility that fueled Born Against. So much so that I can't stop thinking that Sam Mcpheeters is somehow behind this. This is especially true when one reads through the intellectually biting lyrics. Even the 2 silly instrumentals are cool (which says a lot for someone who hates his peanut butter mixed with his chocolate) I stand behind this recommendation of the Books Lie 110%(MY)

BOOKS ON TAPE - TAKE A READ ON THE RIDING, CD

This is interesting. Ever since the Coup interview, Hip-hop has been sneaking its way into the pages of PP. I personally think this is a good thing, even though some may disagree. Fuck 'em. Anyhow, Books On Tape is an instrumental DJ mix by Todd Drootin. He brings forth some interesting tracks that are real tight. Some tracks are more interesting then others, but that should go without saying. The ones that stand out are those that are more stimulating and more daring in sound. Some of these songs like "Do The Nervous" has more of an ambient / droning feel to them which is a compliment by all means. There are some tracks with a real 80's new school feel, even though you would never have heard that kind of stuff then. "...On the Riding" is a real decent effort that hopefully won't be ignored. If this kid keeps going in this more non-traditional direction, he's going to be awesome in every sense of the word. (DM)

THE DISSIDENTS - CONFORMITY IS DEFORMITY, CD

A historical CD, charting the rise and fall of this early 1980s Cleveland punk rock group. You have to appreciate the generous humility of Frank of Smog Veil records, who was one of the Dissidents' first drummers, until he was replaced. "No hard feelings, I sucked," he writes in the liner notes. After a chance meeting years later, he's putting out this fine retrospective CD. The twenty songs are solid works of raw punk rock artistry in that great, fleeting early '80s mold. The sound ranges from Dischord to early Sonic Youth, with the driving bass and the feedback experiments. The packaging has the story of the band (Paul and Scott met at Catholic High School), and the requisite but always cool poster flyer collage. (DAL)

DON AUSTIN - ST, 7"

My roommate just commented that Don Austin rhymes with frosting. I guess it kind of does. Thanks for the intro, Steve. Any ways, Don Austin plays fast and short thrashy hardcore tunes. I'd heard about these guys before and had wanted to check them out. And now that I have, I'm glad that I did. There are 8 songs on here, so you know you're getting a lot of bang for your buck. Or however many bucks this is. They included a sticker with this that looks like the Negative Approach design. But these guys sound more like old DRI or maybe Siege, with some melodic parts and a couple mosh parts to change it up. The lyrics are pretty depressing. It sounds like the singer, or whoever writes the lyrics, doesn't like himself too much. I think he just needs a hug. Fast, angry and loud. Great stuff. (NS)

DRUMS & TUBA, WATER DAMAGE RE-ISSUES VOL. 1 & VOL. 2 CD

Wow! Two full CD's of instrumental tuba driven jams! Ever since high school marching band I have thought that the Tuba was an under used rock n' roll instrument, and so I was excited, yet a little weary when I saw two full length CD's of instrumental Tuba music in my box. Fortunately, I was relieved to find out that these guys really rock! Drums & Tuba are a three piece from Austin, Texas who play tuba driven instrumental music, that sounds like a cross between a New Orleans Brass band and an experimental Chicago art rock band. Think Tortoise with a Tuba. The band actually features guitar as well as tuba and drums, creating a nice cohesive and rocking sound, with the tuba

women. When will all this biker punk end? (RB)

Junk Records, 7071 Warner Ave, F PMB 736, Huntington Beach, CA 92647-5495

BEANS - TIRED SNOW, CD

Canadian "post-rock." The songs are very long and sucky. I'd write a more fair review, but it'd just be more words saying the same thing. (AE)

ZUM Media, PO Box 4449, Berkeley, CA 94704-0449

THE BELLSFURY - ON YR WAY, 7"

Four-song seven inch from this group, featuring former members of Star Death. Original, innovative punk rock with an expansive sound in the tradition of Star Death. (DAL)

No Loyalty to Civilization Records, PO Box 63202, St. Louis, MO 63163

BIG HELLO - ORANGE ALBUM, CD

Thirteen pop songs that could be played on the AM any day. Real infectious music for lovers of great 70's style pop with female vocals. The 2nd CD from Big Hello is as promising as their first the "Apple Album" (EA)

Break up! Records, PO Box 15372 Columbus, OH 43215-0372

BIM SKALA BIM - KRINKLE, CD

The Ska kings of Boston return with 14 brand new tracks that has always set them apart from all the other

ska bands out there. Actually, it's the same formula as their last bunch of albums. It's quality stuff if you dig ska, really. (DM)

Beatville Records, LLC PO Box 42462, Washington DC 20015

BIRD SONGS OF THE MESOZOIC, PETROPHONICS, CD

See review above.

Cuneiform Records, PO Box 8427 Silver Spring, MD 20907-8427

BLONDE REDHEAD, MELODIE CITRONIQUE CD

See review above.

Touch and Go Records, PO box 25520, Chicago IL 60625/ PO box London, England N22 1AR

THE BLOOD BROTHERS- THIS ADULTERY IS RIPE, CD

See review above.

Second Nature Recordings P.O. Box 11543 Kansas, MO 64138

BLUE WATER BOY - S/T, CD

A blast of emo / post HC more in the vein of a Doghouse Records style from Switzerland. This is not wussy by any means and has backbone, if you like longer songs. 7 songs in 36 minutes. Not bad at all. (DM)

Sniffing Records Industries, CC3288 Buenos Aires Argentina

BOOKS ON TAPE - TAKE A READ ON THE RIDING, CD

See review above.

Mad Mad Records, www.subverseco.com

BORN TO LOSE - HERE'S TO YOU, CD

Well-played, catchy pop punk. This reminds me of Everready. And since they came first, I guess you guys lose again. At least they're not called Born To Loose. (NS)

No address

CAPITALIST CASUALTIES / UNHOLY GRAVE - SPLIT 7"

Capitalist Casualties add another split to their huge discography. Fast thrash not unlike early DRI. Unholy Grave are from Japan and play equally as fast. A great release, pick it up before it goes out of print (SY)

Deaf American Recordings, C/O R.Hoak, #3 Bethel Church Road, Dillsburg, PA 17019

CHIXDIGGIT!, FROM SCENE TO SHINING SCENE, CD

Canada's number one answer in pop punk n' roll technology return. My friend Jamie loves these guys because they write good songs about girls and hockey and girls and bad times and girls and... He'll be excited. (DM)

Honest Don's Deep Pockets, PO Box 192027 San Francisco, CA 94119-2027

COACH - PACKAGE DEAL, 7"

Coach play fun, catchy pop music. The singer has an accent that sometimes walks the fine line between cute and obnoxiously annoying. I tried to look up some

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Art Ettinger (AE)

Since 1983, ANTiSEEN's been one of the most prolific bands out there. With over 30 7" and at least 7 full-lengths to their name, it's hard to pinpoint which of their releases is the most classic. But I'm gonna go with 1989's "Noise for the Sake of Noise." This sucker kicks all ass. Jeff Clayton's vocals are just PERFECT on this one. We're talking serious scum rock 'n' roll, with thick guitars and a down-home country influence often imitated but never duplicated. Songs like "Mill Working Man," "Psycho Path," and a fierce cover of the Ramones' "I Don't Care," will have you screaming for more. There's nothing I'd rather be listening to right now than this album! Luckily, there's somewhat of a renewed interest in this band lately. Fans and novices alike should seek out the recent ANTiSEEN book (!) "15 Years, 3 Chords, and One Hell of a Bloody Trail!," the CD re-release of "Southern Hostility/Eat More Possum" on Man's Ruin, and the amazing Steel Cage Records ANTiSEEN collection. Guitarist Joe Young might be a North Carolina representative by the time you read this. Hope that won't impact touring! I only saw ANTiSEEN play once, and I've not been to a more joyously brutal show since. If you think they're great recorded, you ain't heard nothin'!!! Even this dorky record reviewer was in too much of a trance to leave the club despite the near riot that ensued.

Besides the ANTiSEEN reissues, I've also been listening to the new Hellstomper releases (10" from Italy and CD on Man's Ruin), the Adolf and the Piss Artists full-length, anything and everything by Combat 84, and the Brass Tacks 7" on Headache Records.

playing the bass part (of course). The musicianship these guys demonstrate is first rate, and they get a remarkably layered and nuanced sound out of such limited instrumentation. On The Flying Ballerina, the second volume of the Water Damaged series, they do a cover of "God Bows to Math" by the Minutemen, which is pretty awesome. Apparently these guys are opening for Ani DiFranco on her current tour, and regardless of my opinion of Miss DiFranco, it's good to see that these guys will soon be getting the attention they deserve. This band isn't for everybody, but if you like interesting music and like to see bands experiment with different instrumentation, then Drums & Tuba comes highly recommended. (JK)

THE EXPLOSION - STEAL THIS, CD

I haven't heard a Revelation record in a really long time, so I had no idea there were bands that sounded like this on the classic hardcore label. Doesn't it suck how factioned off so many types of punk and hardcore are becoming? Doesn't anyone remember when going to a show was going to a show??? Hell, in some pockets ALL shows were called "hardcore shows," regardless of what the actual style of the night was. But back to The Explosion. This is definitely a hardcore EP, but it borrows from Oi/streetpunk sounds as much as it borrows from old school sxe bands. The result is a very different-sounding band. Oi and sxe might not be able to co-exist as

scenes, but they really do mix well musically. There are only 5 songs on this, and I haven't heard their first full-length, but they seem to be going for the gimmick here, especially on their theme song, the cute "E.X.P.L.O.S.I.O.N.," which rules. This is the perfect band for someone with a soft spot for hardcore that also has an appreciation for skin bands. The first song, "Dotted Lines," is like a straight-forward early Dischord hardcore track. The other four are more intricate, and are structured like Cocksparrer (!) songs. Very different, noteworthy EP. (AE)

THE FORGOTTEN - KEEP THE CORPSES QUIET, CD

I didn't hear this band's first full-length, but I doubt it's better than this amazing album. These guys must get compared to Rancid a lot because the singer really does sound a lot like Lintbrush. But even on their first single and LP, Rancid lacked the intensity of this incredible band. Anyway, The Forgotten play catchy streetpunk with political lyrics most rational folks can relate to. The songs put down religious assholes, conformists, and other deserving un-punk targets. TKO Records strikes another hit— do they EVER put out a shitty release? Easily one of the finer recognizable labels of our time. I bet the vinyl version of this sounds even better. These guys sound like a slightly faster version of Bonecrusher or The Unseen, but with more of an oldschool punk influence. "Revolutionary" is one of the better anthems

info about the band on their website, but it was in German. I never took German. (ES)

Doghhouse Records P.O. Box 8946 Toledo, OH 43623

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR DECISION TO BECOME A PILOT, CD

A classic example of the sad state of affairs in today's emotional music world. (AS)

Aisle 2 Records, P.O. Box 157, Neenah, WI 54957

DAMAD - MEATJACK, CD

Chunky, demonic mid-tempo heavy metal. Sludgecore sounds occasionally punctuated by a driving riff or two, interesting feedback techniques. (DAL)

At a Loss Records, PO Box 3597, Annapolis, MD 21402

DAN DE LEON - SCIENCE FICTION, 7"

From what I can tell, it's three songs of decent, if possible, emo without any "core" to it. Out of Germany, but in discernible English and vocals reminiscent of the Bare Naked dude. (AS)

The Disappointed Love Letter, Postfach 10 28 48, 33538 Bielefeld, Germany

DAN JANISCH/KEPI, 7"

Split seven inch with songwriter Dan Janisch and Kepi Ghoulie of the Groove Ghoulies each contributing a tune.

Underground twangy folk of the highest quality. (DAL)

What Else? Records, Columbus, IN 47202

DARLINGTON - TEXAS PUNK ROCK SWEETHEARTS, 7"

Four song seven inch from this Dallas band, featuring former members of the Queers. Solid pop punk with that Texas flavor. (DAL)

She's Gone Records, no address given

DAVID LIGHTBOURNE'S STOP AND LISTEN BOYS, MONKEY JUNK CD

Three-piece old-time blues/bluegrass band. Very good stuff, but not exactly punk rock. Nifty. (JK)

Upland Records, PO box 36 Fort Collins, Colorado 80522

DEATH OF MARAT- THE SHATTERED, CD

English sounding psycho-rock from Colorado. Death of Marat's guitar and drum work on this record is very original. (BC)

Satellite Transmissions P.O. Box 4432 Boulder, CO. 80306

DISGRUNTLED NATION - ST, 7"

This record comes with Inner Muscle #8. It's raw, fast and pissed. It sounds like early 80's hardcore, like the Necros, later Negative Approach or Kill Your Idols. A nice surprise. (NS)

917 Patrick Creek Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901-7528

THE DISSIDENTS - CONFORMITY IS DEFORMITY, CD

See review above.

Smog Veil Records, PMB 454, 774 Mays #10, U.V., NV 89451

DON AUSTIN - ST, 7"

See review above.

Rubber City Records, P.O. Box 8349, Akron, OH 44320

DRUMS & TUBA, BOX FETISH/WATER DAMAGE RE-ISSUES VOL. 1 CD

DRUMS & TUBA, THE FLYING BALLERINA /WATER DAMAGE RE-ISSUES VOL. 2, CD

See review above.

My Pal God Records, 47 Hardy Drive, Princeton NJ 08540

DUANE PETERS & THE HUNNS - NOT GONNA PAY, 7"

This 7" features Duane of the US Bombs. It's that 77' style ala the Clash and the Pistols with drunk sounding sing a longs. It's definitely good stuff if you dig any of these efforts. Worth checking out for some good raw classic sounding punk rock n' roll. (DM)

Hostage Records, PO Box 7736 Huntington Beach, CA 92615

EC80R - S/T, 7"

No info given except some reviews and a bio describing their full-length album. The two songs given are

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Andy Slob (AS)

FLIPPER - SEX BOMB BABY, LP Sometimes idiocy, ineptness and lack of pretension can be the most beautiful combinations. Flipper is a classic example of this, although a good case could also be made for the theory that they were just playing dumb. Take the most annoying guitar playing possible, backed, most often, with a plodding, singular bass line and drum-beat, and half talk/yell some either funny, dark, yet enlightening lyrics, and you have the chaos known as Flipper. The point of the matter is that this is ten times more entertaining than a dozen bands that are trying too hard to be "something". Flipper was not copying anybody, whether it was planned or just for the hell of it, they created some timeless, room clearing crap. The album has all of their classic 45 cuts: "Sex Bomb Baby", which is just three words and a bass line, "Ha Ha Ha", no one else's description of life has ever been better, "Love Canal", a lasting topical piece, and the tour de force, "Sacrifice", which is pure poetic justice for the masses in suburbia. "Can you hear the war cry?" yes I can! Become enlightened, drop the boredom that you're now hailing as great, that you'll forget in a month, and get some Flipper (skip that "we're only in it for the drug money album" American Grafishy though). But remember...Flipper causes you to make decisions because you will have to decide if they're great or if they suck because no one comes away saying Flipper is just okay!

Things taking up time in my CD player this week: that damn new Jets To Brazil album, Hellnation - "Cheerleaders for Imperialism", and The Socials - U Dance U Die CDR demo thing.

you'll hear this year or any year. This band won't be forgotten in a decade. And judging by the photo spread on the sleeve, they may even still be playing in 10 years! (AE)

FRACTURE - DISCOGRAPHY, CD

So this CD came out half a year ago and I got it for review. I took it out on the road with me and it was great. I even ran into Atom Goren and told him how much I loved the Fracture CD. I loved it so much that I forgot to review it. So when I got an email from Atom asking which issue it had been reviewed in, I felt like a real asshole. So here is my chance for redemption. Most of you are aware of Atom and His Package and buy his records and constantly give him the money he well deserves. But in the early 90's, a time before the Package, Fracture was the band where Atom put his energy. They were 5 friends from Pennsylvania busting their ass and touring the way a band should. This CD collects their 12", their two 7"s and demos recorded by some guy who was once in the band Boston. Fracture remind me much of Propagandhi with lyrics equally as great. The songs are catchy and addictive. Is Fracture for fans of Atom and His Package? Definitely. And for the people who hate Atom And His Package? Maybe you will like this instead. (SY)

FUN PEOPLE - THE PORTRAIT OF SUDAMERICAN SUN ROCKERS, LP

A self released album of high-spirited punk from Argentina. Fun People mix it up musically, going from mellow to hardcore but the changes between songs never feel forced. A very strong 7 Seconds influence is present. It reminds me very much of how Logical Nonsense used to change their styles up, especially on their Deadtine LP. Sorry if that is too obscure of a reference for you, but you can just add that to the list of records you should own. Great song writing on this album. There is a strong political theme amongst the lyrics, covering the fucked-up state of living in this world. Yet the vocals are delivered with a feeling of strength and a positive message, instead of the usual doomy whine. Fun People also give up great covers of the New York Dolls, Black Sabbath, and the Clash, with the Clash and Black Sabbath songs sung in Spanish. They are on tour of the U.S. as I write this. The Punk Planet release schedule is not on their side. By the time you read this, they will be gone. I was lucky enough to catch them in Chicago and the show was great. High fives to anyone else who caught them on their tour, you were spoiled. (SY)

full of distortion and raw energy via electronic dance music. Very high energy that's borderline annoying but yet somewhat intriguing. Whatever... (DM)

Girlie Action, Lafayette St., Suite 1302 New York, NY

EC8OR- THE ONE AND ONLY HIGH AND LOW, CD

Freaky British male/female fronted industrial dance and drug music. I guess "Liquid Sky" needed a new soundtrack for the year 2000. (BC)

DH Records 2 Prowse Place, London NW1 9PH, UK.

END OF THE CENTURY PARTY - S/T, LP

Fighting against the dullness of music, End of The Century Party kick out some gem songs of spastic tempos and all over the place melodies. Idiots call this Emo Power Violence because the guitar player utilizes the octave to convey melody. Palatka and Reversal Of Man also got that stupid label placed upon them. It all sounds like well written hardcore to me. (SY)

Belladonna Records, PO Box 13673, Gainesville, FL 32604

EUCLID-S/T CD

Frank Black singing over an inventive emo band makes for a great CD that you will totally enjoy once before filing under E to never listen to again. (MY)

Second Nature Recordings, POB 11543, Kansas City MO, 64138

EVERY MANS HERO-NO ONE EVER SAID A WORD CD

A killer Hardcore effort with very Jake Filth like shrieking. Everyone of these songs is a lyrical love letter to Jesus. Beware!(MY)

Bettie Rocket, 3912 Portola Dr. 207, Santa Cruz CA 95062

EXCELSIOR - S/T, 12"EP

This is one rockin' band from the city of brotherly love. The vocal style is crazed and often reminds me of Apocalypse Hoboken. Classic riffs laden with a hard punk edge = good. Taste the bile. (RB)

Belladonna, PO box 13673, Gainesville, FL 32604

THE EXPLOSION - STEAL THIS, CD

See review above.

Revelation Records, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232

THE FAIRWAYS / THREE BERRY ICE CREAM, PERMANENT VACATION, CD

Split EP, both bands play cute, happy, somewhat spacey Japanese pop that sounds a lot like Pizzicato Five. Either you will love it or it will make you want to puke. (JK)

Dogprint Records, PO box 2120 Teaneck NJ 07666

FEAR - AMERICAN BEER, CD

A Fear album in the year 2000, who could have know? The sound is just what you expect. Maybe they could

even get on Saturday Night Live again? (SY)

Hall Of Records, PO Box 69281, West Hollywood, CA 90069

FED BY RAVENS - SECOND GUESSING, SECOND CHANCES, CD

There is something so wrong with this band. Musically, they're spastic but come off weak as hell, like if the Blood Brothers didn't know what they were doing. Bad lyrics, bad band. (RE)

Raven Republic, PO Box 8918 Minneapolis, MN 55408

FIVE DAY MESSIAH - "BEST OF 84-85 VOL. 2", 10"

One of the better faster-than-light smart-alleck political hardcore bands that have come my way. Witty and cynical, the sense of humor is pretty good, but often just silly. (RB)

Paco Garden, PO box 18455, Denver, CO 80218-0455

FIVE EIGHT - THE GOOD NURSE, CD

Pained emo-pop from Athens, Georgia. Sounds a lot like Gentlemen-era Afghan Whigs. A lot. (DAL)

Deep Elm Records, PO Box 36939, Charlotte, NC 28236

FIVEHEAD - GOODIE THE RAT, 7"

Two song 7" from this guitar-driven indie rock outfit. Original twists and turns on the lo-fi formula, with complex lines and original layering. (DAL)

Peek-A-Boo Industries, PO Box 49542, Austin, TX 78765

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Brian Czarnik (BC)

PEGBOY – 3 CHORD MONTE Using the ideology of "It doesn't have to be old to be a classic" (even though this record did turn 10 this year) I have to pick the debut 4 song LP. from Pegboy "3 Chord Monte." I bought this classic slab of vinyl at one of their first shows in the local Chicago punk scene. From the opening hum of John Haggerty's legendary guitar sound from "Through My Fingers" you realize that you are in for a ride. This song was even played at the alternative dance clubs in Chicago. It was such a great song, and all the DJs knew it. No night was complete at Exit, 950, or Neo until you moshed around in a club pit at 2 a.m. in the morning to this one. This song is one of the best songs ever! Batting second is the retro minded "My Youth." The older you get, the more sense this song makes. The band is tight on this one. Drummer (and brother to John) Joe Haggerty and bass player Steve Saylor were a driving force that very few bands could compete with. Combine that with Larry Damore's power vocals and John's amazing guitar and you got vintage Chicago punk rock. Side two comes in with "Fade Away" and "Method." All these songs were later put on their amazing debut full length "Strong Reaction", but for some unknown reason they all sound better here. No one could touch early Pegboy; the band was power personified. If Chicago bands had stayed with this sound I wouldn't be living in an animal sanctuary in Tampa, Florida right now. Oh well....

Current Favs: The Blood Brothers "This Adultery is Ripe", Nobody's "I've been everywhere", Kiss "Destroyer", The Numbers "I" 7inch, and the theme from "That 70's Show" done by Cheap Trick.

GAMEFACE – ALWAYS ON, CD

It's always nice to get a CD to review that you were going to buy anyway. And I'm not talking about that Secondhands CD. Here's the new CD from one of the best pop punk bands still around. I guess they've "matured" a bit though and aren't quite as pop punky as before. Post pop punk? Whatever it is, it's good. But I do miss the pop of their older stuff. This album is pretty mellow. Gameface used to be the type of band that you'd like to listen to while driving around on a sunny summer day. Now they've become more of a rainy day band. I mean, I love a rainy night just as much as Kenny Loggins, but not as much as a sunny day. I know this sounds like a bad review, but I still like Gameface a lot. Jeff's lyrics and vocals are still great. And the music has always been really good. Basically, I'm saying that I like their old stuff better. But I'm sure with more time, this CD will keep me satisfied, no matter what the weather. (NS)

GET HIGH – II, CD

Like Gameface, this band's current CD isn't quite as good as their earlier stuff, but it's still really good. Their first album was a little faster than this and had more similarities to Swiz or Dag Nasty. This CD is a little more rockin', sounding more like American Standard, Serpico or early Lifetime

mixed with hard rock. They have that post hardcore sound with good guitar parts and howling vocals. This seems like a band that would have been around in the early 90's, when bands were a little more diverse. I don't really know where they fit in with "today's sound," but they're a welcome change from most current hardcore bands. (NS)

GODS REFLEX – SCENES FROM A MOTEL SEDUCTION, CD

A few years ago I got this demo tape from a friend of mine for this band and at the time it was exactly what I wanted to hear. Gods Reflex played upbeat, emotional punk songs but they did it without sounding too much like anyone else. This is their second full length and it is in the same vein as everything else they have done. They haven't changed their sound or the writing style. The lyrics are very personal and sometimes even sappy. Lyrics like "let's set our hearts on fire / I'll hold your hand / you hold my breath" don't come across as sincere to me anymore. I can only think that this is someone's embarrassing diary open to anyone to read it, full of things that they don't really want us to read, but we will anyway. The layout of the record is odd too. It *actually* has scenes from a motel seduction, and I wonder if this is supposed to be a concept album. The pictures show a boy and girl struggling over

FLATUS – "BLINDSIDED", CD

Tidy punk from boring Ramones-worshippers. Maybe someone turned the Wynona Riders' style knob down from 8 to 2 and transplanted them to New Jersey. (RB)
Black Pumpkin Records, Inc., P.O. Box 4377, River Edge, NJ 07661-4377

NOBODYS – I'VE BEEN EVERYWHERE, CD

II covers (Queers, Gotohells, Chixdiggit, etc...) from the well traveled Colorado band, "Nobody's." Behind the disc is a picture of Lemmy (need you want more?) (BC)
Suburban Home Records P.O. Box 40757, Denver, CO. 80204

THE FLIPSIDES-S/T CD

Do you remember those lame mid 80's new wave themed valley girl teen angst movies. The Flipsides were the prom band that rocked. (MY)
Relaxative Records PMB #31 32882 21st street, SF CA, 94110-2423

FLORES DEL SOL – "FIVE ROCK SONGS", CDEP

These rockers from Argentina know how to do it. There are just enough nice soft spots to set you up for their polished assaults. The lyrics are handy in both Spanish and English for you. "Impressive. Most impressive, but you're not a Jedi yet." (RB)

FLUX OF PINK INDIANS – LIVE STATEMENT, CD

One of the greatest CRASS label bands there ever was. A great show taken from 1982, right when they were at their best. I give much praise to Overground for putting this out, Flux of Pink Indians should not be forgotten. (SY)

Overground Records, PO Box 1NW, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 1NW

THE FLYING LUTTENBACHERS – "...THE TRUTH IS A FUCKING LIE..." CD

Free-form noise with a pretty diverse range of instruments. The fifth track takes shape and gets pretty intense. The austere, blank packaging is neat, but address-less. (DAL)

THE FORGOTTEN – KEEP THE CORPSES QUIET, CD

See review above.
TKO Records, 4104 24th St. #103, San Francisco, CA 94114

FRACAS – ALWAYS DRUNK AND INCAPABLE OF LOVE, CD

Fast punk with rough vocals. Imagine Lee Ving singing for older AFI, with some whoa's thrown in there. Then imagine a couple of gibbon monkeys are stroking your back and picking bugs from your hair. Ah... (NS)
1431A Park St., Alameda, CA 94501

FRANK JORDAN – "DECOY", CD

This is refreshing. It's a kind of slow-mo Minutemen surf style sound. I won't ever listen to it again, but it gets points for not being screaming hardcore and intensifying my headache even further on this beautiful Sunday afternoon that's being wasted at the computer. (RB)
Cornerstone RAS, 6285 E Spring St #234, Long Beach, CA 90808

FREDRIK SVENSSON – "LUBOR LINGO", 7"

This is bound to get a chuckle out of anyone you play it for. This is like psychotic Spanish top-40 or something. Not very good, but if you want to scare that special someone away, throw this on and pretend you're way into it. (RB)

Hodors Vag 2, S-611 50 Nyköping, Sweden

GAMEFACE – ALWAYS ON, CD

See review above.
Revelation, P.O. Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232

GET HIGH – II, CD

See review above.
Aloes International, 279 Pearl St. #3L, Cambridge, MA 02139

HEAVY PEBBLE – FORTITUDE, CD

See review above.
Heavy Pebble, heavypebble@yahoo.com

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Brian Manning (BJM)

A staple of any good bar's jukebox is the classic AC DC album *Back in Black*. Recorded in 1980 after the death of their original singer, Bon Scott, this album is the first to feature Brian Johnson on vocals. While there is a general consensus among fans that Scott was the better singer, it is tough to dispute that this is AC DC's best record. It starts with the ominous bell-tolling of "Hells Bells," and the rock doesn't let up for ten songs, ending with the anthemic "Rock and Roll Ain't Noise Pollution." There are no duds on this record, and the hits are among AC DC's best. "Back in Black" and "You Shook Me All Night Long" are a solid enough foundation, and those are just the songs that everyone already knows. Throw in the underrated "Shoot to Thrill" and "Have A Drink On Me," and you have a rock and roll classic. One of the best things about AC DC is the tone that Angus and Malcolm Young get from their guitars. A light distortion provides a good rock and roll sound, yet allows for both feedback and a clear definition of the notes they play. The rhythm section plays relatively simple parts but maintains a groove that gives AC DC a sound all their own. And Johnson's high pitched screechy vocals follow Scott's rock and roll legacy well. Call it what you will, but this record rocks.

the emotions of a one-night stand, but the pictures feel forced and unemotional. I think something more objective, and not so emotional should have been used instead, because it confuses the listener. Are we supposed to read this as a narrative? Is it all about a one-night stand? In any case, this music is solid and these guys are sincere about what they do, so I recommend it because it's much better than most shit out now. (RE)

HEAVY PEBBLE- FORTITUDE, CD

This isn't my favorite release by far, but I see a lot of promise with these cats. A guy and girl share the vocal responsibilities to some decent mid tempo indie music. Our female vocalist (no band credits within) steals this recording. Her voice compliments the music quite well. Sort of sounds like Siouxsie (however you spell her name) but a bit more cheerful. The male vocals remind me of Lou Barlow in many ways. Heavy Pebble have that early to mid 90's indie rock sound that doesn't seem to be all the rage, but doesn't go out of style either, if that says anything. If this is their first recorded effort, Heavy Pebble could be a band to watch for. (DM)

THE HOLY CHILDHOOD, UP WITH WHAT I'M DOWN WITH CD

Gern Bladstern Records has put out some of the more interesting bands to come on the scene lately, including The World Inferno Friendship Society, Rye Coalition, Natural Lemon & Lime Flavors and now The Holy Childhood. As far as I can gather, The Holy Childhood is mainly the brainchild of Danny Leo,

brother of Ted Leo, who produced the album and who is in a band called the Pharmacists, also on Gern Bladstern. Along with the brothers Leo, there are like 16 other people listed as being in the band, but it doesn't say what any of them do. Most of the songs on this album are piano driven, with a full band: horns, female backup singers, tambourine, the works. I really can't say what this band reminds me of. At first I thought maybe a weird emo version of Ben Folds Five, but that is pretty far off base. About the only thing keeping me from totally loving this album is Danny Leo's voice, which sort of warbles in somewhere between high pitched out of tune wailing and sing song spoken word. For the most part his voice works with the music, but it takes a little getting used to. The songs are well crafted and the production and instrumental arrangements work well to make these songs really rock. There are a few throwaway tracks on here, but for the most part a very solid and original release. Recommended. (JK)

THE JEALOUS SOUND- CD

I wish it was 1990 again and I haven't heard a million bands destroy what alternative music used to be for me. There once was a feeling you got from hearing music that was pop but still a little different from top 40 bands. With distorted guitars (sounding like a certain Chicago Pumpkin band) and dreamy vocals that band takes you for a little mind trip for 5 songs on this disc. This band could be huge (maybe they might jump to stupid major label commercialism up the ass land) but hopefully they will make it in the indie college

HEY MERCEDES - S/T, CDEP

Isn't everyone sick of this limp-wristed crap yet? It's some of the most ineffectual, played-out, meaningless rock music you could listen to. Are we to believe these pretty boys have problems and worries just like we do? (RB)

Polyvinyl, PO box 1885, Danville, IL 61834

HOLIDAY MATINEE CD COMPILATION VOL. 2

Horrible comp of Casio synthesizer, easy listening soft rock and pseudo Beatles music. Nothing on this rocks I listened to it twice just to make sure. (MY)

Better Looking records 11041 Santa Monica blvd., PMB #302 LA CA, 90025-3523

THE HOLY CHILDHOOD, UP WITH WHAT I'M DOWN WITH CD

See review above.

Glen Bladstern Records, PO box 356, River Edge, NJ 07661

IDAHO/ COBOLT- SPLIT, 7"

Two very, very slow German groups. One slow song from each dismal loving band. (BC)

SNC Empire P.O. Box 77721, 39007 Magdeberg, Germany

IMPURE WILHELMINA - AFRAID, CD

This is a form of metal, sludge core from Switzerland. The style says it all, slow and aggressive music, at times being almost melodic, with deep and screeching vocals. Not really my cup of tea, but not bad. But the "bullet in your cunt" line doesn't settle well with me. They must lean more towards metal... (DM)

Impure Wilhelmina, Rue Du Colombier 1 1202 Geneva, Switzerland

INSULT TO INJURY - S/T, LP

Hardcore delivered not unlike Assfactor 4. Hey, they are also from South Carolina so it must be something in the water. Seriously folks, this record is awesome. Great lyrical insight and catchy riffs galore. If you like fast melodic hardcore, pay attention real close. (SY)

Belladonna Records, PO Box 13673, Gainesville, FL 32604

INTERVENZIONE - WALLS OF SHAME, CD

Based in Portugal, Intervenzione reminds me very much of Japanese Hardcore with a mix of old school U.K. stylings. A dual vocal attacks keeps the momentum quick for all 12 songs. Very powerful stuff. (SY)

Rastilho Distribution, Apartado 764, 2401-978 Leiria PORTUGAL

JACK POTENTIAL - ALIBIS, CD

Guitar driven rock ala DC area with real echo vocals. Produced by J. Robbins this disc has a real tight sound and the attention to detail in the recording should be commended. (EA)

Deep Reverb Records PO Box 986 Arlington, VA 22216

THE JEALOUS SOUND, CD

See review above.

Better Looking Records 11041 Santa Monica Blvd. PMB #302, Los Angeles, CA. 90025-3523

JWELED HANDLES - ST, CD

Groovy, indie type instrumental music. If Tortoise was more upbeat or Five Style was less funky, then this might be the result. (NS)

Sixgunlover, 3203 Overcup Oak, Austin, TX 78704

THE JOCKS- TOP THREE ASSHOLES ON THE BOARD, CD

11 songs from San Fran's, "The Jocks," a punk band that spends equal time playing and stealing things from fast food restaurants. (BC)

New Disorder Records 115 Bartlett St. SF, CA. 94110

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Courtney Knox (CK)

Make*Up, Delta 72, Dub Narcotic, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, and even Beck — none of these would even exist had it not been for the trailblazing efforts of DC's Nation of Ulysses. The spastic style of their classic Dischord release, "13-Point Program to Destroy America" hit in 1991, earning a highlighted spot in Rolling Stone's record review pages and pushing aside the conventions of indie rock. The revolution had begun. With this one record, NOU created the untamable monster that would be known among some as "white boy soul," and to others as pure genius. There have been conceptual albums and stage shows galore throughout the path of music history, but few conceptual bands. NOU, like its spawn The Make*Up, were not just a band, but a philosophy — with a prominent almost anarchistic message tainted with twinges of a terrorist group or an evangelical cult. However, although the image was an integral part of NOU, the music remains the focal point of the 13-point program. The Blues have inspired countless white male musicians from the Rolling Stones to the Red Hot Chili Peppers, but none had translated the only true American musical genre into such a complicated tangle of chords and words before the 'Nation'. Traditional, they're not — not even by the standards of other early-90s Dischord bands. But, like the blues pioneers who came before them, the Nation of Ulysses were not meant to fit a mold...and the kids eat it up. Wickedly pretentious, pseudo-political, insanely paroxysmal — NOU are the standard by which all copy-cats should be judged.

I've been listening to the sounds of Uncle Tupelo, Modest Mouse, Bad Religion, and the Spooks. Yay.

scene and will be supported enough and happy with that. "Bitter Strings" starts off soft and sweet and then gets intense with emotion. These songs are packed with chorus's they you can sing and dance too. Track 4 "Quiet Life," has some cool piano parts in it, and sounds like it could be a Jellyfish (remember them?) cover. Maybe this band should just glam out and bring back that cool 70's style. Even though winter is here, it will always be happy springtime when you play this. (BC)

JEROMES DREAM — SEEING MEANS MORE THAN SAFETY, 10"

The best recording I have heard come from this East coast hardcore band. They have quite a potential for power violence clonism, but manage to get by with their own unique sound. I have a tendency to get put off by most of the non-metal bands that play real fast and scream. Call it burnout. And adding keyboards to the mix only makes it worse. On a recent trip to the zoo in Tulsa, Oklahoma I got to see these guys live. I shit you not, someone set up a show in the outer pavilion of the zoo. It turned out to be a great time. During the Jerome's Dream set, someone commented that they had finally got the P.A. working right. Not the case at all, The P.A. still sounded like shit. I turned around only to see the vocalist/

bassist of the pack just screaming into the air and his voice cutting through the drums and guitars. What a set of lungs on that boy, and a nice bouffant hair-do to match. Ten songs released on this record. The guitars add the only subtle hint of a melody to the chaos going on. Banshee style vocals that pierce the mix, coming in and out as if they could be triggered by an on and off switch. The music is nothing straightforward rhythmically and I am impressed. Glad to see this being added to the classics of the Old Glory roster. (SY)

KILL THE MESSENGER — FIVE ON SEVEN, 7"

This is the second release from Kill The Messenger, featuring members of Outspoken and Death By Stereo. From the outside, this record just looks cool, with it's hot pink with black and white drawings on the sleeve and label, and lyrics scrawled across the inside. At first, I couldn't tell if I was playing this at the right speed or not, but once I figured it out [33rpm] I realized it was some pretty slick hardcore. Their five song 7", cleverly titled Five on Seven, features this trio from the San Francisco Bay area's hardcore punk style of music influenced by Black Flag and The Stooges. (ES)

THE JUKEBOX SCENARIO/S/T EP

This is a super lo-fi German emo band who sound like they've practiced twice and are using plastic toy instruments. (MY)

JRAWLS — SLAV, 7"

This three piece keeps it simple. No flashy guitar solos, no quirky keyboards. Just nice harmonies with the vocals over dreamy, pretty music. (ES)

Iron Compass Records 2534 Charlestown Toledo, OH 43613

JUMPIN' BEANS AND THE MOUSTACHES — BORN IN THE USA, 7"

Ultra lo-fi hopped up garage version of the Boss' jingoistic classic, along with an original B-side. More brain-expanding craziness from these masters of the bizarre classic rock cover song. (DAL)

Ball Records, P.O. Box 152, Gardiner, ME 04345

KID CHAOS — LOVE IN THE TIME OF SCURVY, CD

Pop punk with horns, kind of like a punk Chicago. No ska thankfully, and would easily beat a handful Voodoo Glow Skulls in a poker match. (AS)

Vile Beat Records, PO Box 42462, Washington, DC 20015

KILL THE MESSENGER — FIVE ON SEVEN, 7"

See review above.

Phyte Records P.O. Box 90363 Washington, DC 20090

KILL YOUR IDOLS — NO GIMMICKS NEEDED, CD

I wish they still sounded like Negative Approach because they did such a good job at it while remaining fresh. Now they remind me of H2O and all the other bands that have come out of NYC since the early days of CBGB's Sunday matinees. Great lyrics and a good energy present nonetheless. (SY)

Blackout! Records, PO Box 1575, NYC, NY 10009

THE KILLINGTONS — S/T, CD

See review above.

MEG 747 W. Katella Ave. Suite 110 Orange, CA 92867

KNUCKLE-DUSTER — WAITING FOR THE NEXT DILEMMA, CD

Earnest hard ballads, falls somewhere between indie rock and yuppie sitcom theme music.

My Friend Chris Records, 27727 Brandenburg Rd., Ingelside, IL 60041

KOSHER — DEATH TO DRAMA, CD

Cross early Jawbreaker with the current Southern Cal skatepunk sound and what you get is Kosher. Only four songs covering scene politics, friends, the American dream, etc. (AS)

Kosher, 311 Ming St., Warrensburg, MO 64093

KRIGSHOT — ...OCH HOTET KVARSTAR, 7"

Swedish Thrash Attack! Krigshot finally put out the record with a recording that suits them. Noisy and fast, they should teach others how its done. (SY)

Sound Pollution, PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017

LANDO'S 45 — ...THE END..., 7"

Lando's 45 play fast, fun Chicago style punk rock. One of the members of this band is Daryl, of the Bollweevils, and thus, Lando's 45 have a similar sound, but with a bit more edge. (ES)

Harmless Records 1437 West Hood Chicago, IL 60660

LAST DAYS OF APRIL — ANGEL YOUTH, CD

Pleasant, slow yet pushy emo that should please fans of The Promise Ring. Pretty punk for a release with a glockenspiel!!!! (AE)

Bad Taste Records, Stora Sodergatan 38, 222 23 Lund, Sweden

LIKE DAVID — BEYOND THE SHIFTING SAND, CD

See review above.

Bettie Rocket, 3912 Portola Dr #207, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

LIMECELL — DESTROY THE UNDERGROUND, CD

Hard drinking thug punk from a band that proudly proclaims its Philadelphia roots. "They grew up in a rough and tumble neighborhood where little kids grow up wailing on each other with hockey sticks and stainless steel lunch pails," say the liner notes. It shows. (DAL)

Headache Records, PO Box 204, Midland Park, NJ 07432

LONELY KINGS/DIVIT — FEEL IT, CD

Four songs each from two Bay Area hard rock bands. The creative riffage doesn't quite balance out the awkward vocals. (DAL)

Coldfront Records, PO Box 8345, Berkeley, CA 94707

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Dana Morse (DM)

It was my freshman year in high school way back in 88'-89' when I first found out that Punk had a less aggressive side that could still kick some serious ass. I found this out when I heard the Lemonheads' "Hate Your Friends" LP. Some of the songs ripped and were serious rocking tunes. Then there were these tunes that had more of a melody and rhythm that was more moving than intense. I was so impressed. Not that I didn't want to hear Minor Threat's scream for sXe or Rollins' Black Flag hollows, I found just out that punk could still be so rad and yet not as angry. "Hate Your Friends" was a pivotal record in my collection as were "Creator" and "Lick" which were not as crunchy but just as good. Of course the Lemonheads suck now, but people make wrong choices in life. Any of the albums on Taang! Records are worth checking out to see the Lemonheads' glory days.

What Dana listens to: the new Drowningman, Godspeed You Black Emperor!, F.O.D., the new Daltonic on Phyte Records, Sole of Anticon's "Bottle Of Humans" and the phone message of my girl on the answering machine.

THE KILLINGTONS - S/T, CD

This eleven track CD is hard to describe. It's not really emo, and it's not really indie rock, and it's not really rock 'n' roll, but if you stuck those three elements in a blender and hit puree, you'd probably get a smooth blend that sounds something like The Killingtons. They dig bands like Dinosaur Jr., Jane's Addiction, and My Bloody Valentine. They have played with bands like At The Drive-In, Sonic Youth, Reel Big Fish, and Sunny Day Real Estate, and thus, their influences are all over the place, producing a unique yet distinct sound that is hard to categorize. Think New Wave mixed with Alternative plus all of the above, and you've got The Killingtons. (ES)

LIKE DAVID - "BEYOND THE SHIFTING SAND", CD

I find it difficult as a writer to adequately describe my intense hatred of brain-washing musical cults like this. I'm so afraid of what they could do to a kid. Their aim is to reach into that troubled teenage brain of yours and switch off the free-thinking portion, tell you they love you, that theirs is the way to salvation, and take you INTO THE FOLD. White supremacy cults, gangs, and this band are all essentially the same to me. For some reason they want you to be like them, to think like them...to amass an army of clones. Sound familiar? That's not the punk rock I'm excited about and care about, and I personally

don't welcome it here. There is a place for faith in punk, but not for a preaching religion that messes with your head. Everyone has a right to deal with life however they see fit...but *their* life, not yours. (Both albums I got from this label were thoroughly destroyed and deposited in the trash in an effort to limit their influence as much as I possibly can.) (RB)

NICE GUY EDDIE - I WAS THERE..., CD

This trio of pop punkers, fast becoming the pride of Wasilla, Alaska, bust out a whole bunch of tunes in the same vein as say Blink 182. Hey, I don't even know if I've ever heard more than one Blink song but I'll still stick with what I said. This CD is well recorded and energetically executed, and it should please anyone who might still be a fan of this style. Thankfully, they steer clear of any of those Screeching Weaselisms that still tend to plague pop punk bands. My only complaint is why does everything sound so damn happy. Even after their umpteenth song of teen romance gone wrong, they try to get political on a song called "Stained Flag", but it still ends up sounding happy. Hell, if getting girls to dump your ass makes you feel that good, you probably do have an optimistic outlook on life always knowing that the happiness of rejection is probably only a phone call away. I don't know? I was just hoping that kids from our largest state could give me some other kind of perspective on life. (AS)

THE LOSERS - BROKEN DREAMS, CD

Extremely generic pop punk. This should have never left the world of garage boom-box recordings. (RE)
Indian Burn Records, 8019 Ontario St, Omaha, NE 68124

LUCERO - S/T, 7"

Side 1 is "My Best Girl," a pretty little country song with a hint of a country twang. Side 2 is a cover of Jawbreaker's "Kiss The Bottle," country style. Definitely original, and quite a nice change of pace. (ES)
Landmark Records P.O. Box 251565 Little Rock, AR 72225

LYNX - S/T, CD

Complex, showmehowfancyoucanbe post-punk with classical orchestral-sounding arrangements, no vocals, and no surprises. (AE)
Box Factory Records, PO Box 477866, Chicago, IL 60647

MIOZAN - "THORN IN YOUR SIDE", CD

This grunting hardcore quintet hails from Deutschland. Reminds me of that song from Brain Candy: "Life is short, life is shit, and soon it will be over." The difference is this has no sense of humor and the music really gets on your nerves. (RB)
Mad Mob, PO box 61 06 41, 10937 Berlin, Germany

THE MOONEY SUZUKI - PEOPLE GET READY, CD

Straight out rock and roll inspired equally from the 60s and 70s. One of the many superstars on Estrus these days. You will sing along with these tunes as easily as you do to the Kinks on the AM. (EA)
Estrus Records PO Box 2125 Bellingham, WA 98227

NEW ACTION FOUR - S/T, 7"

Side 1 has two songs, "New Action One" and "New Action Two," both of which are screamy, almost pre-pubescent sounding vocals over guitar-driven rock. Side 2 has "New Action Four" etched into it. Cool. (ES)
Sound on Sound P.O. Box 687 Berkeley, CA 94704-0687

NEW BRUTALISM - A DIAGRAM WITHOUT SCALE OR DIMENSION, LP

Strong energy and a great recording keeps this record interesting. Musically, it is a Shellac and Fugazi performance all in one. (SY)
ABC Group Documentaion, 918 Windgate Street, Knoxville, TN 37919

THE NEW RISING SONS - THIEVES AND ANGELS, CD

The packaging is really nice, but they misspelled "thieves" in the title. "I" before "e" except after "c", guys. The tuneage is cleanly produced, shiny radio friendly pop. (DAL)
GrapeOS, 332 Bleeker Street, PMB K42, New York, NY 10014

NICE GUY EDDIE - I WAS THERE..., CD

See review above.
no address, try email: abelx@sprintmail.com

NINJA SCHOOL - CHOKING HAZARD, 7"

Two tunes from this Kansas threesome, full of rich instrumentation, interweaving guitar work, a thick sound. (DAL)
865 Watson Lane, Wichita, KS 67207

NO MEANS NO - ONE, CD

Another strong release from No Means No. This time around you get a Miles Davis cover and a real, real slow version of the Ramones' "Beat on the Brat". (EA)
Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092 SF, CA 94141-9092

NOISEGATE - SUSPENDED ANIMATION AMBIENT VOL. 1, CD

More of the droning ambient industrial noise that's so popular with the kids nowadays. Descended from Xenakis, but quieter. He had shrapnel stuck in his head: what's the deal with these guys? (DAL)
Tumult, PO Box 642371, San Francisco, CA 94164-2371

THE NUMBERS- 1, 7"

California beach punk for the year 2000. Basic b/w cover, 45 rpm speed, 2 songs.... good clean fun punk isn't dead yet. (BC)
Hostage Records 8861 Bolin Cir, Huntington Beach, CA. 92646

OUT OUT OUT - THE BOOMERANG MANIFESTO, CD

Jumps around between a bunch of genres, light to hard rock, lots of guitar effects, earnest vocals. (DAL)
Hard Right Records, no address given

PARIS TEXAS, BRAZILLIANT! CD

New five song EP from Paris, Texas. Melodic fast paced emo rock type stuff. What you would expect from Paris, Texas. Not bad. (JK)

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Eric Action (EA)

We're gonna have a big fuckin' party tonight. Without a question the best release of the 1990's is the biggest party of them all, the Devil Dogs 4th LP "Saturday Night Fever". The genius was to put fake live babbles to "into" and "outro" into each song while beer bottles are clanging in the background. The ten originals alone would make any other band sweat, but in true Devil Dogs fashion the covers throw them over the top. You get Gary Glitter, The Victims, The Rolling Stones and a wonderful, unbelievable cover of Gene Pitney's "Backstage". The true sexist, energy packed, macho record that is without a doubt one of the best produced records courtesy of Conrad Uno and Egg Studios. Saturday Night Fever is polished and more rock, less punk, than their earlier efforts and the true style shines. The LP was released on Crypt while the CD version on Sympathy for the Record Industry has a few extra tracks from 7" releases including the very un-PC "Down on Your Knees". I can easily say that a month has not gone by in the last half decade that I did not listen to this album. You will catch yourself singing along to these songs all day once you get hooked. If you can take a joke and love good rock and roll then invite a bunch of girls over and turn the volume knob all the way to ten and dance with yer' baby.

Lately I haven't been listening to a lot of music except for the Pere Ubu box set, the Misfits box set, the new Shellac LP, and a lot of Modern Lovers.

QUIXOTIC, NIGHT FOR DAY CD

Quixotic represents a unique cross between a 50's girl group, a lo-fi grunge punk band and a gospel act. Produced by Guy Piccioletto, Night for Day showcases Quixotic's weird and haunting music with just the right balance of grit and cleanliness. The band's vocals switch between male and female, with the female vocals pervading most of the songs, including covers of the old 50's tune, "What's so Good About Goodbye?" and a traditional gospel song, "I'm the light of the World". Quixotic rock with a weird circular rhythm and haunting melodies that become almost hypnotic after a while. Listening to this band invokes images of haunted farmhouses and heartbreak and witches and dark stuff like that, but still manages to avoid being cheesy and gimmicky. My only complaint would be that while this is a very good album, the repetitive quality of the songs tends make it hard to listen to this album for long periods of time, as many songs sound quite similar. Sort of like a blues album in that it is basically variations on one or two really good songs throughout. This is a small gripe, and all in all this is a very good album. Check it out. (JK)

THE RIFFS - WHITE LINE KIDS, 7"

When a 45 comes out and it has a big hole either the band is TRYING to be hip or IS hip. The Riffs fall into the later category. Their photos make 'em look like The Casualties, but this is very old sounding. Like the Pagans, but lower-fi. I don't know if this would be as cool if hi-fi, but the mono vinyl and basic production give this a really neat feel. There's a fair amount of garage ROCK being churned out these days, but this is garage PUNK! The vocalist is either a true genius or is truly tone-deaf. Either way, his off-key crazed vocals are exemplary. I wonder who these kids play to in Portland? If they were really smart, they'd release an album under the guise of it being a "lost classic" by some unknown band from the late 70's, then re-emerge as musical icons for the new millenium. This is a record that ought to be snuck onto every vintage jukebox you can find. On an unrelated note, I picture Joan Jett at the beginning of the "I Love Rock 'n' Roll" video listening to this instead of "Bad Reputation." (AE)

PELE, THE NUDES CD

Instrumental smart guy music in the vein of Euphone or Turing Machine. Interesting (JK)

Polyvinyl Records co. PO Box 1885 Danville, IL 61834

PET ROGRAD - "...ANOTHER HAPPY TALE", 7"

This has some good straight-ahead stuff (and some weird funk and piano jazz). But all in all, it's got strong, happy pop hooks that I can't help but get into. The b-side actually had me thinking Buzzcocks for a second...until it went into a reggae beat. (RB)

Paranoial, Postfach 70, 1013 Wien, Austria

PINWOOD DERBY/FIGHTSHY - SPLIT, 7"

Pinewood Derby play three poppy songs that make me think of pre-keyboard Get Up Kids. However, lyrically and vocally, they are similar in style to Knapsack. I hate to classify them as emo-pop, but I don't know what else to call them. [Why must everything be categorized, you ask? Good question, and I don't know.] Fightshy are very similar to Pinewood Derby, but with a bit more edge, and a bit more rock and roll. (ES)

LineRed Productions 135 N. Fraser Dr. Mesa, AZ 85203

PLASTIK ACID - THREE APRILS IN OBLIVION, CD

Slow, droning heavy metal interspersed with dark ambient noise. Background music for the next neighborhood exorcism. (DAL)

Cerebrum Records, no address given

PORTER HALL - TEN MONTH SOUNDTRACK, CD

See review above.

Endearing PO Box 69006, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 2G9, Canada

PROSPEKT - S/T, CD

Nine emo songs with complex guitars and lyrics about light, time, history, and glass. Not an aggressive moment here, despite the screamed vocals. (AE)

The Buddy System, 302 Bedford Ave. #284, Brooklyn, NY 11211

PROSPER - "BREVITY OF MAN'S DAYS", CD

Preaching hardcore bands like this come to me in my nightmares. In them, I like this crap, but then I wake up intensely thankful I'm not such a putz and put on a Born Against record. (RB)

Bettie Rocket, 3912 Portola Dr. #207, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

THE PROTEENS-HOT LAVA TREATMENT CD

This rawks outta control until the wily nilly singers come on to ruin the charge. Think of the worse elements of the Queers/Jimmies. This is limited to 500. (MY)

Imperfekt Records POB 2846, Columbia MD, 21045

THE PROTEENS / THE PEABODIES-TWICE AS NICE CD

The Proteens will appeal to 12 year old girls who like the softest moments of the Ramones. The Peabodies are catchy as fuck in a Queers/Screeching Weasel way which will appeal to a wide cross section of readers. (MY)

Imperfekt Records, POB 2846, Columbia MD, 21045

PROUDENTALL - WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE, CD

Textless, abstract cover art, hard to read, hand written lyrics, and a name that isn't my dictionary equals only one thing, emo. Listenable stuff that drags less than most in this genre. (AS)

SunSeaSky Productions, 307 West Lake Drive, Random Lake, WI 53075

QUIXOTIC, NIGHT FOR DAY CD

See review above.

Igor Stix, PO box 21811 Washington D.C. 20009

REACT - DEUS EX MACHINA, CD

Twenty-four spazz-metal tracks about everything from political eco-awareness to an anti-heroin anthem.

Nice usage of alternating girl/boy screamy vocals. (ES)

Blackened Distribution P.O. Box 8722 Minneapolis, MN 55408

RED SHIRT BRIGADE - MOCK ELECTION AND THE POST SELECTION, CD

Upbeat poppy indie rock with a pretty original sound. It's short, just six songs, but full of oohs and aahs, swirling riffs and grooves sure to make your head bob. (DAL)

Suburban Sprawl, 8111 Carrousel, Westland, MI 48185

RETARDED - S/T, CD

Three Italians doing the Ramones thing. Leather jackets, three chord pop songs done as well as can be. This isn't the newest or freshest thing in the world, but this release is one of the best in this genre that I have heard in five years. (EA)

Hangover Records Viale G. D'Annunzio 9, 20123 Milano

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Erin Schleckman (ES)

Truth be told, this classic review stuff is getting more and more difficult. I promise to study up on old school punk bands and have a fantastic classic review for next time, but for now, I will save myself the embarrassment of trying to come up with something last minute and sounding like a moron, and instead just list some of my recent favorite records.

I can't get enough of... Jejeune - R.I.P., Apart from the Projector - Lover's Knot, Bright Eyes - Fevers and Mirrors, Bright Eyes - Letting Off the Happiness, Lamb - Fear of Fours, and Travis - The Man Who. **I was pretty disappointed by...** Radiohead - Kid A, and Green Day - Warning. I was looking forward to both of those so much, and ended up a sad, sad girl.

SAN LORENZO - NOTHING NEW EVER WORKS, CD

This one had me hooked from the mellow and haunting intro to the first song. It's almost like if the Doors were reincarnated as a lo-fi British indie rock band. They make impressive use of the glockenspiel and the trumpet. I also have to say that I was struck by the snowy band photo, depicting the three of them on a winding road through a bleak white landscape. The recording quality isn't great, and sometimes it's so quiet you can barely make out the sound, but somehow that suits the mood. There's something very serene here, almost eerie. (DAL)

THE SECONDHANDS - THE SAME TRAINS, CD

Okay, I'm not sure if I like this CD or hate it. Based on this confusion, I think this CD deserves a little more consideration. This is an entire CD of instrumental ska. I know, sounds terrible, right? But it's traditional ska sounding, so it's not just that annoying chicka chicka sound all over the place. It's instrumental, so you don't hear some asshole yelling, "Pick it up!" every 2 seconds. And I'm not sure if instrumental music has the power to be horrible, unless the musicians can't play their instruments. The music just kind of blends into the background and then you can focus on something else. Like writing reviews. This stuff is so laid back. The guitar and keyboard have the same tone as the Meters. If the Meters were a ska band, they might sound like this. But still, I'm torn. I mean it's ska. Ska runs neck in neck with swing as being the

lamest music possible. Let me give you an example. This band's record label is located in Appleton, in the same state that I'm from. I saw a flyer once for a big ska show in Appleton one time. Guess what it was called. That's right: Skappleton. And when I think about a local ska band from our town, Fuck! Alright, now I'm getting angry. (NS)

SERVO - NOW WE ARE SIX, 7"

This band is just plain awesome. They play fast and furious songs while being completely innocent and fun. This female fronted band plays power pop punk that continues to compliment each of the components of the band. Sweet and clear vocals, hard driving guitars, poppy bass lines, and fast, pounding drums continue to balance each other out throughout the 7". Songs about screwing up and relationships are the general themes but who said they are bad topics. This is just great fun. Recommended. (DM)

7 SECONDS - SCREAM REAL LOUD, CD

This was a treat for someone reaching their years a bit. I haven't pulled out my "Skins, Brains, and Guts" single in ages and this scratched an itch that I didn't even know I had. Seven Seconds hold up real well, even live and almost twenty years later. This live collection of 26 songs was recorded in Los Angeles in the year 2000. There were a few songs that I didn't know, but all the hits are here: Not Just Boys Fun, If the Kids are United, Young 'Til I Die, Regress No Way, 99 Red Balloons, and of course Walk Together Rock

THE RIFFS - WHITE LINE KIDS, 7"

See review above.

Tombstone Records, 1951 W. Burnside Box 1951, Portland, OR 97209

RHYTHM OF BLACK LINES - ST, CD

Ugh. Boring, depressing indie rock. (NS)

Sixgunlover, 3203 Overcup Oak, Austin, TX 78704

RHYTHM OF BLACK LINES - SET A SUMMERY TABLE, CD

Nearly all instrumental mood music which was quite a chunk to digest at over thirty eight minutes for six tunes.

Nice for those people who might actually be into jazz. (AS)

Six Gun Lover, 3203 Overcup Oak, Austin, TX 78704

THE ROCK A TEENS - SWEET BIRD OF YOUTH, CD

Really hard to knock this release. It has a great organ thing going on. I am not sure who will like this, besides those already into the Merge Records thing. I can easily think anyone who likes early Stiff records will like the songs on this disc. (EA)

Merge Records PO Box 1235 Chapel Hill, NC 27514

SAN LORENZO, NOTHING NEW EVER WORKS, CD

See review above.

Gringo Records, PO Box 3904, Clacton, Essex, CO15 5TF

SAY HI TO LISA - LIVING BETTER THROUGH ELECTRICITY, CD

I nominate this for worst design this issue—poor color choices, a repeating circuit board, ugh. Plus, they play melodic radio rock that makes me throw this CD against the wall. (RE)

Cactus Records 49 Dover St. Apt. 4, Somerville, MA 02144

SCALPLOCK - ON WHOSE TERMS? CD

Fast thrash with good breakdowns from England. Political lyrical messages and cover art featuring pictures of Third World countries. You have seen and heard it before. (SY)

Sound Pollution, PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017

THE SECONDHANDS - THE SAME TRAINS, CD

See review above.

Kick Save Records, P.O. Box 404, Appleton, WI 54912-0404

SECRET HATE - "POP CULT VOMIT", CD

This is a twitching mass. It was spewed from somewhere, but I have no clue where. I think we're heading back towards cock rock faster than we thought. Skid Row playing with White Zombie's play book, that's it.

Cornerstone RAS, 16572 Burke In, Huntington Beach, CA 92647-4538

SENTIMIENTOS OPRIMIDOS/DIRTIES-SPLIT EP

S.O. is rough political Hardcore similar to the Locust without the organ. The dirties remind me of a shitty live tape of one of Los Crudos first shows. Good Argentinean Hardcore throughout. (MY)

El Grito POB 18198, LA CA, 90018

SERGIO VEGA - THE RAY MARTIN SESSIONS, CD

They've got a hippie, classic rock feel to them. This is a 5-song EP that's pretty slickly produced. I like the

tracks that sound like they're from the Rushmore soundtrack. (DAL)

GrapeOS, 332 Blecker Street, PMB K42, New York, NY 10014

SERVO - NOW WE ARE SIX, 7"

See review above.

Crackle! Records PO Box 7 Otley Is21 1yb England

7 SECONDS - SCREAM REAL LOUD, CD

See review above.

Side One Dummy 6201 Sunset BLVD, Suite 211 Hollywood, CA 90028

SHOTWELL / MIAMI - SPLIT LP

See review above.

No Records, PO Box 144088, Berkeley, CA 94712

SIG TRANSIT GLORIA, 2>8>2000 CD

Fast paced Power Pop with a slightly emo feel. New Wave-ish keyboards add a nice sound. Pretty cool. (JK)

Johann's Face Records, PO box 479164 Chicago IL 60647

THE SKIRTCASERS - THE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO SKIRT CHASING, CD

These guys take a lesson from the Chemical People and receive an A+. Catchy punk with great lyrics and much fun. You never listened to the Chemical People did you? Loser. (SY)

Skirtchaser Entertainment, 16309 Garo St, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

SOLEDAD BROTHERS - S/T. CD

How do two young Caucasian boys find so much blues in their blood. This is a real treat. This isn't a re-hash

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Josh Kermeit (JK)

WEEN, PURE GUAVA ELEKTRA RECORDS What can be said about Ween that hasn't already been said? To sum up a band like Ween in with words is a difficult task. They have been called a joke band, a drug band, juvenile, sexist, racist, homophobic and stupid and retarded. Ween is all things to all people, and love them or hate them, they are a hard band to ignore. One of the only bands to ever leave Bevis and Butthead dumbfounded, the brothers Ween (Dean & Gene) are responsible making some of the weirdest, most fucked up music to come from a major label since Captain Beefheart. Recorded entirely on four track, Pure Guava was Ween's debut major label album on Elektra records, and it's still pretty amazing that something this fucked up and brilliant ever made its way into mass production. Featuring such songs as, Push the Little Daisies, Touch my Tootie, Reggae Junkie Jew and Poopship Destroyer, Pure Guava is perhaps Ween's finest hour; showcasing not only the brother's bizarre and often offensive sense of humor, but also their talents as really good songwriters. To call Ween a joke band is like calling Andy Kaufman "just a comedian". No joke is too low or too high brow for Ween. Ween never smirk, nor do they ever reveal a punch line. You can never really tell if they are kidding or not, and they never let you know. Creative, Intelligent without being pretentious, Politically Incorrect and funny as hell, in many ways, Ween are the exact opposite of what punk has become; a stale, uninteresting, pretentious, politically correct, uncreative bunch of crap. I could go on and on about how much I like this band, but unless you have experienced their music my words will be highly inefficient. Long live the Boognish.

What I'm listening to: The Holy Childhood, Old Time Religion, the Beach Boys, Jackie Mitoo: the Keyboard King of Studio One

Together. Can we take Kevin and company seriously so many years later. I owned the Drop Acid releases, and some of Kevin's solo stuff which have all been sold or given to someone who would have appreciated them more than I. I would hope that this isn't an introduction to one of the most influential bands of the 1980's, but another chance for more. The sound and energy make this one late career record that I really, honestly suggest. (EA)

SHOTWELL/MIAMI - SPLIT LP

This is one of the most beautiful records I've gotten in recent months. It's not only a record, it's a document of the brute force that was the Mission district live shows these bands were at the center of. This isn't a live recording, but the 32-page booklet (by Iggy Scam of the superb *Scam* zine) tells the harrowing story of the DIY struggle taken to the streets of San Francisco in the summer of 1998. The best part about the Shotwell side of the record is how there are different recording situations for different sets of songs - some 4 track, some more tracks. Miami (now defunct) plays a little dirtier brand of punk with very gravelly vocals. When you listen to this and read this it makes you

feel wistful about your own scene and you dream of a time when your group could maybe have an important event or time to document like that. I read the booklet and wanted to get go there and dance with them so bad. This inspires me. (RB)

STRIKE ANYWHERE - CHORUS OF ONE, CDEP

It's a damn good thing that I already own the 12" version of this. The label that put this out, Red Leader, must not give a shit that they are releasing such a fine EP. I got the CD in a jewel case, with nothing but a printout of the cover. What up with that shit? The other theory I'm going with is that somewhere out in this crazy world, a nutso 14 year old Strike Anywhere fan has an extra copy of this CD, a shitty Epson printer, and a big heart. Either way, it got to me in the mail, along with a lot of crap, so I was very excited to review this. Anyway, if you don't know, this band is made up people from early 90s punk bands, most importantly the singer from Inquisition. Rough and melodic, the singer's voice makes this band. The music is solid melodic hardcore, picking up exactly where Inquisition left off three years ago. The lyrics are still in

of the blues, but rather a great interpretation of it that is fresh and sounds so genuine and real coming through the speakers. (EA)

Estus Records PO Box 2125 Bellingham, WA 98227

THE SPOOKY - DAWN OF THE DEAD, 7"

Four good, catchy songs from a band trying to do the horror punk thing, and yes, they do appear to dress up, but somehow they ghoulishly end up sounding like All to me. (AS)

Hostage Records, 7826 Seaglen Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92648

SUNDAY'S BEST - POISED TO BREAK, CD

Pleasant pop with a light feel to it, although the throbbing "Winter-owned" could be a great single, and the opening track has an '80s style vocal harmony that's pretty slick. (DAL)

Polyvinyl Record Co., PO Box 1885, Danville, IL 61834

TANTRUM - INTO THIN AIR, CD

5 angry and musically melodic songs from France's Tantrum. Is the late great Sam Kinison the singer in this band? (What a come back for Sammy!) (BC)

Supine Records BP6, 34600 Herepian, France.

TED LEO AND THE PHARMACISTS - TREBLE IN TROUBLE, CD

See review above.

Ace Fu Records, PO Box 3388, Hoboken, NJ 07030

TEENBEATERS, MY WORLD, MY SKY, CD

Alternative, radio-friendly garbage. They've got some kind of lounge sound going, and it's just bad. Offensive lyrics and sex and drugs and fags. This is the most un-punk thing ever. (RE)

Teenbeaters, 35 E.38th St. #3E NYC, NY 10016

THINKING PLAGUE - EARLY PLAGUE YEARS, CD

Rare and unavailable for over a decade, this is the first two LP's by this confusing art-rock band. The female vocals and violent lyrics remind me of Lisa Suckdog, minus the charm. (AE)

Cuneiform Records, PO Box 8427, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8427

THE TIM VERSION - CREATING FORCES THAT DON'T EXIST, CD

See review above.

Attention Deficit Disorder, PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674

TO DIE FOR / ENGRAVE - "ALL THE PASSION TO KEEP YOU MOVING", SPLIT CD

See review above.

Defiance, Ritterstrasse 52, 50668 Kohn

TRAILER TRASH UK - GO AHEAD, CD

Fourteen tracks of beer-fueled political punk rock. Tracks 1-7 are studio recorded, 8-14 are recorded live

at the Killtime in Philly. The quality of the live stuff is still really well done, which was a nice surprise. (ES)
Broken Down Volvo of Hate 4220 Pine St. 2nd Floor Philadelphia, PA 19104

TURTURROS, THE - "I'M NOT", 7"

This is old man clone pop-punk from Rome. Weird. Aspiring to Joey Vindictive vocals and Queers this and Ramones that... (RB)

Umberto D'Agostino, via F. Rosazza 52, 00153 Rome, Italy

THE VICE PRINCIPALS - WOLFMAN AMADEUS JACKBOOT, 7

See review above.

Junk Records, 7071 Warner Ave. F, PMB 736, Huntington Beach, CA 92647-5495

THE VON ZIPPERS, BLITZHACKER, CD

See review above.

Estus Records PO Box 2125 Bellingham, WA 98227

WAIFLE - "AND THE BLOOD WILL COME DOWN LIKE A CURTAIN", 10"

Another overly-serious hardcore band with both emo and technical tendencies. This is full of way too much crappy art and stuff that's supposed to be so meaningful but won't do anyone in the real world a bit of good. I can't take this seriously. (RB)

2005 Monitor Dr, Stafford, VA 22554

THE WALNUT STREET PROJECT - MAGIC IN PATTERNS, CD

Indie music with female vocals. Sounds like newer Gameface minus the energy. Average song length is

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Mike Yurchisin (MY)

I just caught one of the premier Italian Hardcore bands, Raw Power at Gilman. They sounded great but it was obvious that they felt their age (mid40's?) since they were so boring on stage. Back in the day Raw Power had twice the energy of What happens Next? Raw Power is the best of a batch (along with CCR & Wretched) of early 80's hardcore bands. They first came to prominence on MRR comps and BC (bad compilation or borderless countries) Tapes. On the forefront of Punk they're style mixed chugga chugga parts with lightening fast guitar solos. There was little like it at the time. Many Punk rock Purists rejected Raw Power until they saw the passion and mania live. Another unique thing about this band is the vocals imagine a Rocco Siffredi Italian Stallion accent screaming obscenities and you may be on the right track. I recommend The first single: Wop Hour and the first 2 full lengths Screams from the Gutter and After Your Brain. These releases are now back in print on CD by the Westworld label out of Tucson, AZ. It turns out that after their second LP some Brain Surgeon advised Raw Power that hair metal was the wave of the future. Unfortunately the bands subsequent releases sucked until they made a come back to Punk in '97 with Reptile House which is good but far from the perfection that once was.

Shit That Rawks: Scene Killer Vol. 2 CD, Eye Hate God Live, Grimple-Remember CD, The Fells-S/TLP, Murder City Devils-Broken Bottles empty hearts, Blower/Wadge-Split CD, Asshole Parade-Student Ghetto Violence CD, Dahmer-Dahmerized CD

the same territory as well; very idealistic and political/revolution now style. At times, they're hard to take serious but they play and sing with so much heart, it's hard to hate it. This is a great record. (RE)

TED LEO AND THE PHARMACISTS - TREBLE IN TROUBLE, CD

Nice five song CD from former members of Chisel, the Make-Up and other various DC bands. Clean guitars and emotive vocals, that have a slight vibrato effect, punctuate some inventive pop, but not pop punk, songs. Lyrically, they seem to be milking the hope and despair themes which is fitting to the tone of their music and could easily be at home on any alternative or college rock radio station. All in all they're pretty hard to describe on paper which is definitely a good thing, but, in my brain, a pleasant mix of Oasis and Fugazi come to mind (I know my mind is pretty odd). The sad part is that the highlight of the CD is a poignant covering of a Thin Lizzy tune, "Little Girl In Bloom", which is both beautiful and touching. But props up for giving Thin Lizzy the time of day that they deserve - I guess they saw the Behind the Music special too. (AS)

THE TIM VERSION - CREATING FORCES THAT DON'T EXIST, CD

Spirited and energetic, this record sucks you in with superior riffage and keeps you engaged all the way through. There's great guitar work, and they pull off original harmonic effects that give them a unique sound. One song bills them as "The Only Band that Puts Iced Tea in Whiskey Bottles." Okay, fair enough. If you read the lyrics on the sheet it comes off as a major mouthful, but somehow they can pull it off. A high quality record. (DAL)

TO DIE FOR/ENGRAVE - "ALL THE PASSION TO KEEP YOU MOVING", SPLIT CD

This is a superb CD from some insane folks. There's enough layers to keep you listening to this disc for a while, but it's straightforward enough to rock your brains out. This is what that really fast complicated hardcore was meant to be. It's about as good as the old Acrid CD, honestly. For some reason bands like this are either a complete hit or miss with me. I love this CD, but tons of others like Dillinger Escape Plan just annoy me. There must be a fine line. Make no mistake; both these bands are on the right side of it. It builds up to

about 4 minutes. This CD should come with a warning label: "May, and will, cause drowsiness." (NS)

Dance Explosion Records, 626 Walnut St., Meadville, PA 16335

WAR ROCKET AJAX - I LOST MY MIND, CD

See review above.

Bettie Rocket, 3912 Portola Dr. #207, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

WATASHI WA - LOST A FEW BATTLES...WON THE WAR, CD

Standard, generic melodic pop-punk. Apparently this is "relevant for the surf, skate, and snowboard scene." (RE)

Bettie Rocket, 3912 Potola Dr #201 Santa Cruz, CA 95062

WAXWING-ONE FOR THE RIDE CD

Cure like wimpy melancholy music without the Goth trappings that make the Cure somewhat amusing. (MY)

Second Nature Recordings, POB 11543, Kansas City MO, 64138

THE WEIRD LOVE MAKERS - LIVE: BIGGER THAN A COOKIE, CD

Great guitar/garage rock taken live and raw. I have listened to this a dozen times and still can't believe that I have missed the boat on the Weird Love Makers. One of the best releases in awhile in a genre that seems to keep on truckin'. (EA)

Empty Records PO Box 12034 Seattle, WA 98102

WELFARE - "ON A MISSION", 12"EP

This big sound is going to rock you! Heavy guitar and heavy everything else done as well as any other band jumping on the classic rock bandwagon right now. If

you like the Champs but thirst for the straight-up anthem, this is your record. (RB)

Rocknroll Blitzkrieg, PO Box 11906, Berkeley, CA 94712

WESLEY WILLIS AND THE DRAGNEWS - SHAKE YOUR PIGGY BANK, CD

See review above.

Coldfront Records, PO Box 8345, Berkeley, CA 94707

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? - STAND FAST ARMAGEDDON JUSTICE FIGHTER, CD

Hard and fast gutter-style punk with funny titles like "Multiple Tasking with a One Track Mind," "Welcome to the Continuing Saga of My Life of Shit," and "Hard Rice & Molten Rain." 20 tracks, pretty listenable and fun. (DAL)

Sound Pollution, PO Box 17742, Covington, NY 41017

WITH ARMS STILL EMPTY/SINCE BY MAN - SPLIT, CD

Good hardcore split by two newer bands. With Arms Still Empty has a major emo influence. Since by Man is better and plays fiercer hardcore with harsh vocals. (AE)

Kill You for a Dollar, PO Box 68015, Grand Rapids, MI 49516

YAGE / ENGRAVE - SPLIT, 7"

Two great German bands showing off their skills. Engrave reminds me much of ABC Diablo and is just as heavy and powerful. Yage take lessons from

the Canadian sound of Shotmaker and does the sound right. Mastered at 45 rpm and this record sounds good! (SY)

Defiance Records, Ritterstrasse 52, 50668 Kolin, GERMANY

THE YOUNG HASSELHOFFS - GET DUMPED, CD

See review above.

Reinforcement Records, 96 Ehret Ave., Harrington Park, NJ 07640

V/A - CLEVELAND CONFIDENTIAL, CD

Jerks, this is a little too late. I spent quite a few years and just found a copy of this a last year. Sure there are a lot of boots out there of the Cleveland Confidential LP. This legit re-issue is an essential document of the Ohio punk Scene in the early 1980's... bands on this CD has the greats like the Pagans and unheard-ofs like the AK-47's. You should already own a copied version of this. (EA)

Overground Records PO Box 1NW Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1NW

V/A - THE FOREVER COMPILATION, 7"

First release from this fast-growing hardcore label features one newschool song each from Hamilton, Malakhai, With Arms Still Empty, and Just for Kicks. I like Hamilton the best, who sound a little like a metal version of Antischism. (AE)

Kill You for a Dollar, PO Box 68015, Grand Rapids, MI 49516

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Neal Shah (NS)

We were just watching a Jenny Jones about really fat children. What are these parents thinking? I think Jenny Jones should exterminate all of her guests after the show. That would truly make it a worthwhile show. Well, this intro led me to thinking about a Poison Idea review, but then I decided to choose the Big Boys instead. Since their albums are easily available anymore, I'm going to pick "The Fat Elvis" CD as an essential CD to own. I actually just picked up a rare Big Boys album of outtakes at this record convention, where I heard things like, "Oh, I don't buy CDs." And the word "CD" was emphasized like it was the Bubonic Plague. Nerds. Anyway, "The Fat Elvis" contains the last 3 albums of the Big Boys and it is the most fun, most cohesive and funkiest of their material, in my opinion. This has the songs from the Skate Rock comps, where I first heard them. And it has the better of their funky songs. They cover Kool & The Gang's "Hollywood Swinging" and they do their own original funk song, "We Got Soul." This is just fun music. One song is even called "Fun, Fun, Fun." That's what they were all about. They played with Minor Threat AND Trouble Funk. You can only imagine how fun their shows must have been. I remember a local funk band from Milwaukee who were awesome and should have been huge. This is what punk/hardcore is missing these days: fun. The Big Boys' tunes are awesome too. Don't think they're just some novelty band. The Big Boys will make you demand more of music. More variety, more humor and more fun. Aren't you tired of bands preaching and crying? I sure am.

The deadliest of din: Faction, RKL, The Goats "Tricks of the Shade", The Stupids, DRI "4 of a Kind", Dag Nasty - rare internet tracks.

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Ryan Batkie (RB)

An album that has received undying love from me from 17 years of age to present (22) is Dinosaur Jr's "Where You Been". Sure, it caught me a lot of flack from my small town (and well, of course, pretty small mind...) punk brothers, but to deny yourself the Dino Jr is to deny too much. I recognized its rock epic qualities and wasn't afraid to dive head first. From there one will want to go to 1991's "Green Mind" and the J Mascis solo acoustic masterpiece "Martin & Me." All three of these albums showcase a talented songwriter at his best. The much ballyhooed history of Dinosaur and Mascis' involvement with Lou Barlow could fill a book, but it's insignificant in the face of the track record left behind by both men. Dino has always been great, but the early and mid-90's is the era I love. This band blew apart my hatred for overdubs and then J Mascis amazed me again on "Martin & Me" by playing all those amazing songs that always had such blazing intensity and complexity in a solo acoustic set and made the transition seem almost effortless. In fact, the only time I've seen any form of this music live was when he did a similar show last year. Since "Where You Been" in 1993 Dinosaur Jr has put out two albums with the normal J Mascis almost-solo effort format. All is recommended, but the new album, "More Light", from J Mascis and "the Fog" is tremendous. All of this stuff is always pretty easy to find, so don't worry.

PVC discs I've been wearing out: Lovesick 12", The Haggard, lots and lots of Beat Happening

impressive crescendos and stays so fresh as the music never lets you know when it's repeating. It's a subtle trick that one must learn if they're going to enter into this realm. (RB)

THE VICE PRINCIPALS - WOLFMAN AMADEUS JACKBOOT, 7

I've always been a big fan of The Humpers. So when this arrived in the mail I was genuinely excited to notice that this a new band containing Humpers' singer, Scott Drake, who by the way is one of the more original lyricists (does he write the words?), and guitarist, Billy Burks. Since the B-side is a cover of the classic, "Showdown", which was made famous by the NY Dolls, this becomes only a one song teaser. The Vice Principals, whose name alone carries on the Humpers' proud tradition of word play, break absolutely no new ground and milk the same rock and punk territory where the Humpers last few (rushed and/or contractual obligation type?) albums left off. It's more of that rocked out Ramones sound with only the atypical lyrics to set them apart from the crowd. I, personally, was looking for something a little more over the

top or at least pushing some new musical boundaries. If your gonna show your age at least become a rockabilly or an alt country band. (AS)

THE VON ZIPPERS, BLITZHACKER, CD

This is an unbelievable compilation of singles, tributes, and compilation tracks. I never realized how much I loved the Von Zippers until I listened to these vinyl releases all at one time on one nice shiny 5" disc. the Von Zippers have the organ rock down so well that you will dance, yell, and sing along to each track. Some of their best tracks of their two Estrus singles are included. The Von Zippers are a great continuum of bands of the early nineties like the Rip Offs, Mummies or Teengenerate. They are a garage band with catchy songs, that have a sense of humor. Who said guitar rock was dead? (EA)

WAR ROCKET AJAX - I LOST MY MIND, CD

These guys take some of the better elements of the Ramones, Electric Frankenstein and the RipOffs and generate some, though slightly overproduced, catchy ass, fun tunes. It's just a damn shame that every song is about

V/A - THE ISLE OF SPITE, CD

This is a 6-band concept album. A fake fest with crowd-roar and woodstock-esque announcements (a child born, announcement from the stoner activist coalition, etc). The bands are bland and forgettable. (RE)

Catch and Release, 8419 7th St SW, Calgary, AB T2V 1G8 CANADA

V/A - THE LAZY I, CD

After the acoustic campfire introduction by the guy who put this out, this CD blasts into some ska that's...what? good? From there the compilation is pretty hit & (mostly) miss, with worthwhile normal rock songs and annoying punk/ska stuff. (RB)

The Lazy I, 700 G Seaboard St, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

V/A - NEW SOUNDS NEW YORK VOLUME 1, CD

Wide range of 18 alternarock bands trying to hit it big. Best bands are GutterGirl and FF, and others include Emok and Slim. (AE)

New Sounds New York, 286 East 2nd St. #4D, New York, NY 10009

V/A - RISING STARS, CD

Such an apt title, because you can tell they wish to be stars and they want to rise. 'Blink and MXPX sold out, so it's ok if we do, right?' Oh so smooth...Mom & Dad must be proud. (RB)

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REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Russell Etchen (RE)

V/A - DECLINE OF THE WESTERN CIVILIZATION, CD From the first second, this soundtrack grabs you and sets the perfect mood. It captures in a minute and twenty seconds, what punk rock is all about. "That stupid punk rock..." mutters a small, skinhead boy, "...I just think of it as rock and roll, cause that's what it is...it's something new, and it's just reviving old rock and roll...it's fun." This kid didn't know it at the time, but he was introducing, and would go down in infamy, as the kid (Eugene, if I'm not mistaken) who introduces one of the most in-depth documentaries about the Los Angeles punk scene, in the late '70s. This soundtrack captures the sound and feeling of a music scene that was not loved and embraced by every high school kid across America. It was a scene that collected the freaks and fuck-ups and expressed anger and emotion that will never be captured accurately ever again. Black Flag, The Germs, Fear, X, The Circle Jerks, and two lesser known bands Catholic Discipline (featuring Phranc, everyone's favorite lesbian folk-singer), and the Alice Bag Band are all captured live on here, along with interviews with kids in the scene, interviews with X, and the Germs manager explaining why the Germs can't get any shows. If you can track down the video, (I found it at a Blockbuster of ALL places), dub a copy, because it is impossible to find. This soundtrack is difficult to find as well, and should be re-issued because it's something that every punk kid should own.

TOP RECORDS: Radiohead "Kid A", Gang of Four "Entertainment", Shellac "1000 Hurts", Limp Wrist demo tape, Drinking Sweat in the Ash Age zine

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Scott Yahtzee (SY)

The last couple months I have been listening to Assfactor 4, pretty much nonstop. I always get something new out of each listen, from enjoyment to inspiration. But it wasn't always this way. The Assfactors came out of the Dirty South of the Carolinas and I picked up the "Smoked Out" 7" in the summer of 1994. It impressed the hell out of me. I listened to it and I wanted more. It must have been the combination of seeing way too many shows that summer and the overall self-righteousness of the hardcore scene at the time that forced me to sell all my records and give up on hardcore. So I also gave up on the Assfactors. Maybe the truth was that everyone seemed too happy, and I was still in a state of angst and misery left inside me from bad relationships and Joy Division records. I slipped into a state where I believed that nothing creditable had been released after the Rites Of Spring LP. Let us move this story to somewhere in 1997. For some reason my Assfactor 4 7" never got sold and upon organizing my record collection I stumbled upon it. I took the record out and again I was impressed. The straight up hardcore vibe of the early 80's was there but there was so much more. The guitars are what stood out the most to me. They were playing notes in relationship to each other that sounded so unique they could patent the sound. Sitting down and reading the lyrics you either realize they are poetic geniuses or you just don't get it. The LP put out on Old Glory Records is the best release they have done to date, and no I am not referring to the "Sports" album that just came out. I am talking about the self titled LP that came out five years ago and rocks. The LP is fast, with only 1 song over two minutes. Reservoir was supposed to release a discography of all their stuff, but it hasn't happened. Talk to the nice people at No Idea, they will get the music into your hands.

Lately I am having a nervous breakdown living in Lansing, Michigan but I have been surviving by listening to the newest Sweep The Leg Johnny LP, Sto Cazzo! (holy cock!), and The Fucking Champs - IV album is a regular addition to the realm of genius.

the great Jesus Christ. Now I firmly believe that rock and roll is devil's music, and that by playing it most surely sends you into the fiery pit and that by playing punk rock places you into some even deeper sub hell. But I can't shake the feeling that this is just some wacky subculture subverting product looking for souls to save by jumping on the latest trend. These things are always slick and deceiving. In no way does the outer packaging give any hint to the religious propaganda packed inside. Granted, I dig my fair share of Johnny Cash gospel tunes, but the man in black never lowered himself to hiding his faith behind trendy song titles like "Gearhead", "Psycho", or "Zombie Club". I'm just left wondering which church bankrolled this 24 track recording project and amazed at how good whoever wrote this stuff is at co-opting a believable sound. Or maybe it's just that most of the things that I get to review are such passionless drivel. (AS)

WESLEY WILLIS AND THE DRAGNEWS - SHAKE YOUR PIGGY BANK, CD

There are a several different reactions one can have to Wesley Willis, but it's hard not to react to Wesley Willis. Maybe you think he's a genius, the greatest thing since sliced bread. Maybe you think the labels that put out his music are giving this mentally disturbed artist a forum he wouldn't get anywhere else. Maybe you think they're exploiting him. But Willis is a musician who demands attention—one thing he definitely is not is background music. I find him completely engaging, funny, and at times touching. This is a pretty solid collection of his music, some new songs, some old. It's worthwhile because the accompaniment—simple casio keyboard music—seems to fit him a lot better than the cheesy but polished backing tune from the releases on American a few years ago. (DAL)

THE YOUNG HASSELHOFFS - GET DUMPED, CD

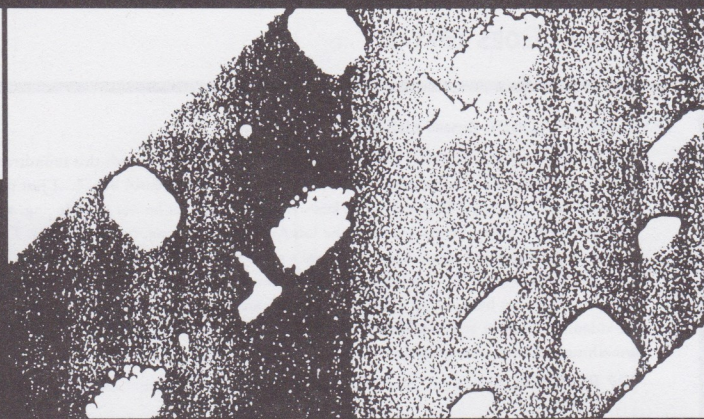
Have you been arguing with your friends over which band rocks harder, Sum 41 or SR-71? If you know what I'm talking about, you should check out this far better pop-punk band. If you have no idea what I'm talking about and like poppy bands, you probably already know of The Young Hasselhoffs. Either

way, "Get Dumped" is a fucking impressive release. It's like these guys have so much energy and are so excited at how great their band is, that they're oblivious to the countless similar bands that have been playing this style of punk for years. This is pop-punk played 100%, no apologies, and no embarrassment. The production is solid, but not overly clean, which is perfect for the band's raw silliness. There are twelve songs on this thing, each of which will stick with you for days and days after just a listening or two. The lyrics are clever, as in the song "80's Doll" where the singer puzzles over why "she likes the Ramones but only Pleasant Dreams and on." Think Mr. T Experience with bigger balls and heavier guitars. I'm swaying back and forth at the keyboard like an asshole as I write this. The Young Hasselhoffs have a new fan and his name is me. (AE)

V/A - PUNK GOES METAL, CD

Ok, so metal is hip right now. The world has caught up to the rest of us who have spent all our years worshipping Iron Maiden, Anthrax, and Judas Priest. And no, we never thought it was a joke. Of all the Metal tribute albums I have heard by Punk bands, this is the best. The reason why? Because musically there is not much difference between West Coast Fat Wreck bands and the rockers of early 80's metal. These guys have always demonstrated that they had the chops to handle the riffs and the blazing solos. Punk is just faster and there is never enough time for guitar solos. This album is fun. It is even more fun if you were there with the originals. Notable tracks come from Bigwig doing Slayer's "War Ensemble", AFI with a loving version of GNR's "My Michelle", Death By Stereo doing White Lion's "Little Fighter", and Diesel Boy pumping up Motley Crue's "Looks That Kill." Strung Out's version of Ozzy Osbourne's "Bark At The Moon" gets my award for taking an original and making it better by speeding it up, even though they can't touch Ozzy's vocal range. A good time for those who love metal, and even for those who have no clue at all. (SY)

PLASTIC FILM



It's 5am. I've been playing Nintendo with my roommates for the past four hours. We don't own a Nintendo, never have, but somehow someone got their hands on one and now we're all doomed. We used to be a pretty productive house, or at least pretended to be, but now... Only Scott seems to be immune, and that's just because he goes off into his room to play guitar for hours on end.

I read an article yesterday that claimed that video games would be the cinema of the next century. Video games, as we now know them, are in their infancy, comparable to the earliest film tests of Edison and the Lumieres. Interesting theory. I read another article that explained how to take the Quake video game engine and use it to make animated movies. I haven't seen one of these yet, but I do love the idea of kids, bored with the constant killing, taking the game apart and reimagining it as a vehicle for their own creativity. Which, in all likelihood, involves a lot of killing.

We started a movie collective here in our town. We've only had three meetings so far, but there is a lot of excitement, energy, and a seemingly genuine desire to complete projects. That in itself is pretty amazing. Our eventual goal is to be a fully functional film and video cooperative. We'll have equipment for production and post-production, seminars with visiting filmmakers, etc. But for now, we mostly serve as a sort of support group, which is ok.

One of our activities that I'm most interested in is a monthly game we play in which we come up with topics for videos that are super-short, easy to do in-camera or with minimal editing and usually involve some technical requirements, too. For example, this month's piece is about nightmares and food, less than four minutes and includes examples of long shots, medium shots and close ups. Pretty simple and dorky, but also an effective way to just get people shooting footage. We (I) so often seem to get hung up planning out elaborate projects with year-long trajectories that it's really nice to make something quick and dirty, watch it once and move on. If it's good, then maybe it becomes the jumping off point for a larger project, but at the very least you've gotten to play with some technical restraints that will almost definitely make you a better filmmaker down the road.

If anyone ends up trying this game out with their own group, I'd be interested to hear about the projects you come up with.

OK, so lest this start to sound like some candy-ass arts and crafts for the film set column, here are some reviews of puuunk stuff that I've seen in the last couple months. Like I said in my first column, I'm especially interested in reviewing DIY stuff that is coming out of the punk community. So send me your work! I'll review anything as long as it's DIY and you're willing to trade or sell copies to people. The more work I make myself the more I

realize that the moment of completion is really only half the project. If you're not figuring out some way to show your work, then you're not doing it justice. (Check out some of Sarah's old *PP* film columns for some examples of truly rad video distro projects. There will be more profiled here in future articles).

CUFF

First off, I want to talk about a few films that I saw at the Chicago Underground Film Festival in August. CUFF is the oldest and one of the best of the "underground" fests. More than anything, it's a fest that supports a really wide range of DIY imagemaking, from psychotronic and transgressive cinema to activist and experimental work. Plus, they have really kickass parties. Somehow I always come away from fests feeling like I missed all of the best pieces, but here's notes on a few that I did manage to catch:

Westway to the World (2000, Don Letts, 80 min). It seems pretty safe to say that if you're reading this, you probably like the Clash. I didn't think that anyone could fuck up a documentary about the Clash, and figured that Don Letts (the former London DJ who introduced the Clash to reggae and has been filming them since they began playing) would be a pretty safe bet to do this film right. Well, he does, more or less. This is really straightforward doc-style, with lots of well-lit

recent interviews with the aging rockers, unique historical footage and a fairly reverent tone. The Clash are given credit for bringing politics to punk, never asked a hard question and poor Topper Headon is set up to be a visible (and somewhat ghostly) reminder of the toll that years of drugged-out rockstardom can take, while everyone else is let off the hook. That said, the footage of the early performances is extraordinary (including some of the 101'ers) and the movie is packed with interesting historical trivia like the origin of the famous photo of Paul Simonon smashing his guitar. Definitely worth renting if it shows up at your local indie video store. Probably worth buying if you're obsessive. I'm not sure when it will be officially out, but you could try writing to Don Letts, c/o 3DD entertainment, 190 Camden High St. London NW1 8QP, England or visit www.westwaytotheworld.com.

Born to Lose: The Last Rock N Roll Movie (Lech Kowalski, 2000, 90 min). Like Westway, this is a fairly straightforward documentary about punk's history, told this time through the person of Johnny Thunders, original New York Doll's guitarist and poster child for heroin addiction. Like Westway, this movie has a director with his P.R. credentials firmly in place, with Kowalski having previously directed the legendary Sex Pistols documentary *D.O.A.* So, in theory, this should be great. I mean, Thunders did write the second and third best songs about heroin ever, right?

But, sadly, it just ain't so. This movie meanders all over the place, trying to find its pace, its vision, anything. Seeing people with needle's hanging out of their arms might be shocking (or at least interesting) in other circumstances, but here it seems no less unusual an accessory than an electric guitar. Other than some all-too-

brief vintage Dolls footage, this movie never sucked me in, never gave me any reason to care about its subject. I think (I hope) that we may have seen a rough-cut and that it's incomplete. There's enough footage there for a good flick, but the editing leaves a lot to be desired. The most interesting part of the movie by far is a tacked-on ending that reveals Johnny's long-lost son, in the middle of Ohio or somewhere, talking about the dad he never knew. Now that's interesting! I want to see a whole movie dedicated to the illegitimate Midwestern offspring of aging/dead rockstars. Like I said, I'm pretty sure that this movie isn't available yet, but you could try writing to Lech Kowalski c/o KW Filmworks 102 Clinton St. New York, NY 10002 or email heartstring@infohouse.com

Songs for Cassavetes (Justin Mitchell, 1999, 80 min). So, my biggest problem with the last two movies (and with a lot of work that claims to be "punk") is that while the subject matter was decidedly punk (experimental/riotous/rough/fun) the form didn't match. They were structured just like a documentary on the civil war or something. *Songs for Cassavetes* is different. A documentary about the current world of DIY indie rock, *Songs for Cassavetes* does a great job of synthesizing interesting music with interesting camera work, and, as a movie, lives and breathes the same DIY ethos as its subjects.

With mostly just live footage of and interviews with bands like Sleater-Kinney the Make-Up, Unwound, The Peechees, Dub Narcotic Sound System and the Hi-fives, filmmaker Mitchell and producer Marvin Miranda do a good job of keeping this interesting and well-paced. The live footage (all shot in 16mm film) is as good as any I've seen since Jem Cohen's *Instrument* and the interviews, though not

always super-insightful, do provide a sense of unity between the bands. Mitchell and Miranda spent over four years on this project, shooting in L.A., Olympia, SF and Washington D.C. If you're a fan of the aforementioned bands, this is a worthwhile document of an era that may feel like ancient history in 5 or 10 years.

I didn't set out to just write about music docs, but I guess it works to put them all together. I saw (and heard about) a lot of other great work at the Chicago Underground Fest this year, so hopefully I'll be able to cover more of that in future columns. There will also be a lot more reviews next column. I'm working on a roundup of recent activist videos, especially all the stuff that has recently come out about the N3O protests in Seattle last year. And maybe some interviews with traveling DIY moviemakers. So, stay tuned.

End Notes

The last thing I want to talk about is seeing Le Tigre last month in Lawrence, Kansas. I've seen other bands (like Man or Astroman?) incorporate projection into their live shows, but never as well as Le Tigre. The slides, pictures, and video stills not only perfectly matched the music, but helped provide some truly powerful moments as the band talked about breaking down barriers between art and activism and their own involvement with recent protests in NYC. I left the show feeling inspired and invigorated, something I haven't felt at a show in a long time. Of course, I also managed to total my car on the way home, so maybe I was a little too invigorated. Whatever. See Le Tigre if they come anywhere near your town. ☺

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DISCOGRAPHY cd



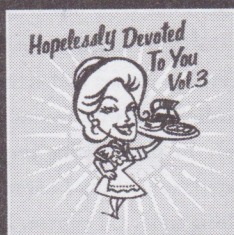
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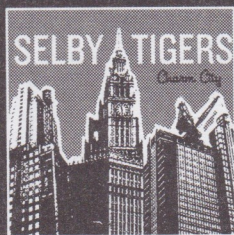


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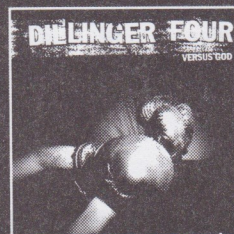
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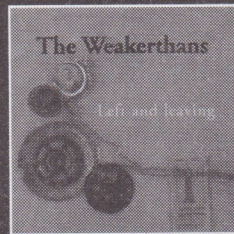
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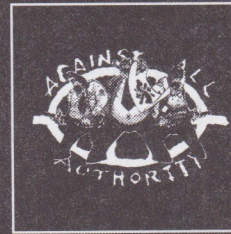
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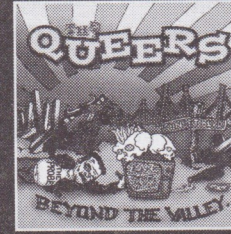
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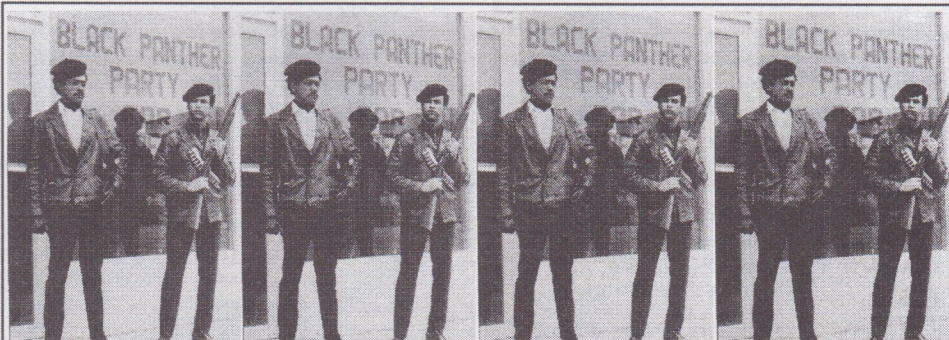
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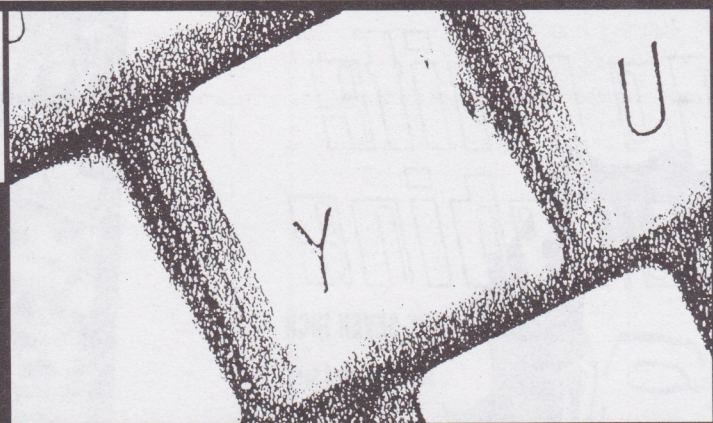
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PAPER

ZINES



Abus Dangereux

This zine is in French, so I apologize for not being able to read it. The layout is pretty slick and it covers the Get Up Kids in this issue. The mag comes with a 5-song CD that's generally good, with a good variety of styles. (Sorry, no Get Up Kids on it.) All in all it's a very normal music magazine with reviews, interviews, etc. Rather thin at 38 pages, though, but also rather thin on annoying advertising, too. If you know French and like emo in general, I think you'll want this. (RB)

\$5 ppd., B.P. 15, 33031 Bordeaux Cedex

Alabama Grrrl #8

This is good stuff. Alabama Grrrl is a queer grrrl zine but that's not really the main focus here. It's all related, but it's like a coming of age, growing, moving, being active kind of zine while not just being aimed at one crowd. When reading it, this can be viewed by zine readers of all walks and enjoyed. It's a half page zine that's quite neat and well put together, which makes a big difference. This is worth checking out for a good down to earth zine with stories about relationships, jobs that "destroy the youth in America", Food Not Bombs and other stories of interest. (DM)

\$2, Ailecia, PO Box 297 Lawrence, KS 66044

Alarm Clock, #39

This issue celebrates women in music. Fun interview with Mary Timony, lots of concert reviews and retrospectives of a few bands. The second half is all reviews of releases and compilations featuring female fronted bands. This is a well of information about the featured bands (Sleater-Kinney, Veruca Salt, Drain STH, the Jackie Papers). The best part is the distinctive artwork that accompanies many of the stories. (DAL)

\$2, Allen Salyer, PO Box 1551, Royal Oak, MI

All Out Of War

This "zine" is only 6 pages! It should have been called All Out of Paper! But seriously, this is a small collection of short, sentimental poems and some photocopied pictures. It looks like an insert to a 7" and the short poems read like lyrics, at least to me. But what do I know? I'm just an English major! I'm used to reading epic poems. (NS)

Hans Christopher Leibold, 100 Sanford St., Glens Falls, NY 12801, Rustmidas@hotmail.com

Aluminum Sauce Delight, #1

The first issue of this zine features rants about the government, reprinted ACLU literature, lots of zine and record reviews, and a whole bunch of gross sex cartoons. The editor promises that the next issue is "gonna be pretty raunchy—so be warned." One can only imagine. I was blown away by the ad rates. Sixty bucks for a full page ad? Whew. Let's see if the pizza place forks over sixty big ones next time after seeing their buffalo wings hocked right next to a cartoon about sucking big dick and eating "box." (DAL)

\$1, PO Box 70, Syracuse, NY 13210

Assassin and the Whiner #12

Self described as 100% true auto-bio comics. The Assassin the Whiner is a great comic book zine that I haven't seen around in quite some time. Carrie has a way of making you feel as you are either her best friend or worst enemy peeking in at her life. Any fan of comics or personal zines will like this one. High contrast stuff that anyone who has gone through life in a alternative world will love. (EA)

\$1 Carrie McNinch PO Box 481051 LA, CA

Clamor, #3

Clamor is a fat glossy magazine covering radical politics, punk rock, and all angles of youth counterculture. It's ambitious, and could turn into a great resource, but it's still not very readable. The best piece is a long look at drug testing in the workplace. I also enjoyed the photo essay from ABC NO Rio. There are interesting first person accounts and interviews from a DIY émigré to the country, a Harley-Davidson enthusiast, an Arab-American rights activist, a vegan in Europe, and a survivor of domestic violence. The magazine is strongest when it goes for first person narratives, but it gets bogged down in the critical analysis and research pieces. Most disappointing were the pieces on the anti-globalization protests, which would have benefited from some personal accounts, and the article on pornography and punk rock (which is preceded by a note from the author saying he intended it to be a real article with reporting and research, but that was too hard). (DAL)

\$4, PO Box 1225, Bowling Green, OH 43402

Clamor, #4

This is their one year anniversary issue, and they've devoted it to the political process. They state in the editors' note that the goal of the magazine is to build a community, particularly of those "who are excluded from the usual avenues of public discussion." Although I still hold to my old criticisms of Clamor, I think it's making a lot of progress. This issue has a more accessible design, shorter pieces, and more first person pieces. A hearty range of perspectives, from a piece on third parties to a piece on the anti-voting league. There are solid interviews with filmmaker Erroll Morris and photographer Charles Gatewood, articles on animal rescue, the rock and roll hall of fame, feminism, living with a painful disease, and plenty of other interesting topics. I'm impressed with the direction they're taking the magazine in. My favorite part is the page of contributor bios, which really drives home the sense of extended community. (DAL)

\$4, PO Box 1225, Bowling Green, OH 43402

Claw Hold No.1 Vol. 1

A very clever 32 page zine dedicated to wrestling. It is filled with info, photos, columns, comics etc. Only problem is that this reviewer believes that wrestling is for sissy nerds. If you are a wussy wrestling fan then it would serve you well to pick up this zine (to beat off to). (MY)

Core, #11

Magazines like this always make me happy. They say in the intro, "the only piece of tape that holds us all together is the love for hardcore, punk and oi music." This is the second issue of this Dutch zine that's entirely in English. It has interviews with bands like Cro-Mags, Suicidal Tendencies, Earth Crisis, New Bomb Turks, Gluecifer, AFI, and more. It's all reviews and interviews, which is a little narrow, but it's a great resource, especially because of its international scope. (DAL)

\$5, Postbus 4269, 5604 EG Eindhoven, Holland

Corkscrew #4

I'm not sure why, but I wasn't feeling this. At times it was messy, at times not. At times you had to read it upright, at times on it's side. The text and the background were always

changing, and it also seemed that the writers were as well ... I think. It would go from poetry to stories without any notice. I don't know why, but this wouldn't be my first choice to read. (DM)

C/o FB, 255 Main St #3 Binghamton, NY 13905

Damn You! #4

Decent interviews with some of the greats of the last few years: Fugazi, Sleater-Kinney, Shellac, Unwound, Karate, etc. Not a lot of personality in this zine, it reads rather dry. Large collection of reviews and interviews. If the bands interest you, then this is a good read. (EA)

\$3 US; Damn You! PO Box 3904, Clacton, Essex, CO15 5TF, UK

Desperate Times, #8

Hand written and drawn comics and personal type zine. Although these type of zines can be sophomoric (which this also is) and witless, this one actually made me laugh, smile, smirk or whatever a grumpy ass like me does with these things. (AS)

PO Box 97, Asheville, NC 28802

Dream Whip #11

This is a jammed packed personal zine documenting the adventures of moving from Austin to California to New York and what's involved in these areas. Our narrator expresses ideas and thoughts about where he is and what's going on in his immediate surroundings. The writing is very poetic at time even though it doesn't seem that was the intention of our hero. This 1/4 size zine is huge for this size (too many pages to count). There are a lot of observations and opinions in Dream Whip that make this collection fun to read. This is very human and down to earth and easy to relate to. No real agenda, just life seen through our narrator's eyes. Good stuff. (DM)

\$3, PO Box 53832 Lubbock, TX 79453

Ducky #6

This is all you can offer after two years? According to the writers, this is the product of a two year hiatus. Too bad it still reeks of horrible zine cliches. Inside you will find these two girls rambling on about their crappy jobs, their cool friends, some zine and record reviews, more cool friend stories, feminism, and more. I'd hate to see what this looked like when there was only a three month gap between issues.

PO Box 1582, Piscataway, NY 08855-1582

dUMPstered apples, #1

A Mountain Dew-fueled cut and paste perzine, done on a \$6.99 typewriter from the Goodwill (Jessi understands that the details matter). The content smoothly goes back and forth from a pretty profound story about a friend's tragic death to a humorous look at product instructions. Also a pieces on globalization, bras, and bands. Great collage work, too. (DAL)

50 cents, 2705 Great Forest Drive, West Bend, WI 53090

Eight Items or Less #1

This is a nice little personal zine that focuses a lot of energy on vegetarianism and veganism. The stories are typical, along the lines of middle class white college girl is punk and has a lot to say. That last line wasn't meant as an insult, just an observation from reading hundreds of zines every year for Punk Planet. I actually would recommend this to any one who is/was in similar situations as the author Beth. Great little zine for issue number one. (EA)

e-mail first bethbee@usa.net

Everlong #2

Rather typical 1/2 page zine with interviews and reviews. It is really easy to get lost in a sea when you try to put out zines like this one. The interview with Donna R was the best piece in this issue. Other interviews include the Candysnatchers, La Donnas, Mensen, and SK8 'N' Ride. (EA)

1 pound, Clay Baldwin 18 Gays Road Hanham Bristol, BS153JS

Every Other #13

A political zine that has some well done articles in it. Nafta, smoking, and the UCITA make up some of the topics looked into. (BC)

\$1. Bug Press 824 W. 47th St. Richmond, VA. 23225

The Exposition #1

Joe writes a very interesting political and personal-themed zine. Inside, he writes about participating in a demonstration, the global economy, graduating, losing friends, sneaking into an abandoned psychiatric hospital, plugs some records and zines, and lists some helpful resources to get info on political causes and groups. (ES)

He's moving soon, so contact him by emailing: smallpoxchamp@hotmail.com.

Food Geek #3

"Food Geek is a little zine that is all about people telling us a thing or two regarding something they know/love/cook/obsess on that revolves around food." This is a small booklet type zine that seems to be made up from mostly outside contributors. There are stories, recipes and cartoons. So if you want to read about food or if you want to share that wacky gazpacho story with the world... (NS)

\$1, Carrie McNinch, P.O. Box 481051, Los Angeles, CA 90048

Full Force Attack #2

This is a streetpunk and oil! zine featuring interviews with Lloyd Kaufman of Troma Films, Chris of skinheads.net, Vicious Rumors, Darkbuster, Dropkick Murphys, Iron Cross, and the River City Rebels. Also inside, music reviews, movie reviews, and a couple of rants. 44 pages/digest. (ES)

\$1 [?] to Andrew F. P.O. Box 1427 Concord, MA 01742

Fuzzy Heads are better #8

This issue Patti takes a back seat and puts out #8 with submissions from her friends. I love FHAB and was a little disappointed in this discovery. After reading this thing twice I can form this opinion. Patti's friends are a lot like her. The writing and stories have a certain familiarity to them. They make me feel like I am on the couch listening to an old chum telling me a story that hasn't been told before. This is a must have for any fan of the personal zine format. (EA)

Patti Kim Box 68568 360A Bloor St. W Toronto, ON m5S 1X1 Canada

Get Bent #7/Unshaven Chi #3

2 cartoon focused zines in one, done by the same person. One side is an ongoing cartoon about 2 has-been ska musicians who are trapped in space in this installment. The other side is a little more autobiographical, while still affording the exaggeration of the cartoon world. (I'm embarrassed that reviewing zines makes me write sentences like that last one.) Ben writes interesting stories with illustrations up to par with bigger comic writers. And if the character that you draw of Bent is you, then you look just like my college roommate freshman year, mustache and all. (NS)

\$2, Ben T. Steckler, P.O. Box 7273, York, PA 17404

Girl

Lesley writes what reads like a play, with notes giving you a setting/situation, followed by dialogue between the characters. However, the note that came with this zine described it as a novella. Girl is a very interesting story about a punk girl and her friends, with stuff about relationships, cheating, love, drugs, fake punk kids, and all kinds of drama in between. (ES)

\$2 ppd. to 114 Canter Blvd. Nepean, ON K2G 2M7 Canada

A Girl and Her Bike #7

A tiny but densely packed personal zine by Angie, who "lives in a swinging bachelorette pad, in Winnipeg, where she sits around listening to records and slurping on gin and tonics - sometimes with friends!" This is the "social retard" issue, and it's full of stories and narratives from her life, laid out like a running mental commentary that, by the end, really makes you feel like you've just spent a week inside her head. Complete with interspersed fragments of song lyrics, little flashes of nostalgia ("she doesn't know that I almost flunked my chordate zoology final to go for a three hour midnight walk with her, the night before the exam..."). It rings true, and I like it. (DAL)

\$1.50, PO Box 2425, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4A7, Canada

Grub #10

24 pages of food for the vegetarian. Comes with 5 pull out recipe cards. The industrial sized recipe of Chili-Mac was worth the two minutes it took to read this zine. Anyone who

really into cooking will only laugh at this. But it is essentially free and I chuckled a few times while reading this puppy. (EA)

55 cent stamp Grub PO Box 1471 Iowa City, IA 52240

Hodgepodge, Issue No. 6

Big zine that is fairly similar to the one that you're holding right now, except that it may actually have more to read. Nice mix of music (reviews, interviews (Rainer Maria, Dismemberment Plan, Catharsis) and informational material (articles on genetic engineering, the Seattle/WTO riots, columns). For once I can say that a zine is actually worth the \$2 cover price. (AS)

983 Little Neck Ave., N. Bellmore, NY 11710

Holy Shit, #1

I like the derivation of the name. As Eric explains in the intro: "Sometimes when you see a band and they are so absolutely inspiring, the only thing you can do is hold your jaw open and be like 'Holy Shit.'" We've all been there, and that's why we're here. I also dig the type-writer cut and paste layout, although it's pretty dense, pages of solid text. There's a long travel diary about a trip to Haiti, interviews with Fed By Ravens, DUSC, and the Sewing Terrorists, some self-proclaimed Nader "propaganda," reflections on relationships, Christianity, the environment, and vegetarianism. I think it's pretty fascinating how the editor balances his faith and his strictly healthy lifestyle with a love of hardcore music and radical politics. Makes for an enlightening read. (DAL)

1015 Worden St., SE Grand Rapids, MI 49507

If Only Thoughts Kill #2

This is a fairly new zine that shows promise. During my read I'm trying to figure out the age of the writers involved. Not that age matters, but if these kids who write in this zine continue and improve they way they write about their stories involving their lives during high school times and before hand, these kids are going to be awesome at it later on down the road. There's a lot of honesty behind the writing that is quite admirable. However, the hand written parts, the faded printing and some of the very busy backgrounds takes away from this zine. But if you're looking for a zine full of teen angst and some great deadpan humor, IOTCK could be worth checking out. (DM)

\$1, 9605 Deer Trail Haslett, MI 48840

If Thoughts Could Kill, #1

Small first time personal thoughts zine with a story about actually burning down a thrift store. Hmm. (AS)

9605 Deer Trail, Haslett, MI 48840

Infection #1

They call this the Anti-People zine. The back cover states, "Infection zine is pro-evolution, pro-abortion, and advocates the death penalty. All life is not precious.". Inside, it is pre-

dominantly an interview-heavy zine [funny, since they hate people, right?], with interviews with Dead Bodies Everywhere, Wadge, X625X, Seven Foot Spleen, Sloth, Pig Destroyer, Shank, Ken Pollution, and Despise You. There is also a list of what they think sucks, some record reviews, zombie film reviews, and little Jesus sXe things throughout. 40 pages/digest. (ES)

\$1 US/\$2 elsewhere to 634 Millwood Rd. Toronto, ON M4S 1K8 Canada

Impact Press #28

This newsprint magazine is dedicated to covering what it views as pertinent social issues of the day: genetic engineering is the cover story, and there are also (usually 1-page) articles on misogyny in hip-hop, animal cruelty at the racetrack, etc. A lot of these articles are good and not exactly obvious, which is good. It's bringing to light some issues you might not have thought about. There's a lot here and it's a pretty good overview. What it doesn't need is the music review section. They don't do that good of a job and it's just not needed. What is good about it is the "top picks" section. (RB)

\$2, PMB 361, 10151 University Blvd, Orlando, FL 32817

Inner Muscle #8

An interview with Henry Fiat's Open Sore, some reviews, a story about traveling abroad and a story accompanied by pictures of foreign people that I don't really understand. It comes with a good 7" by Disgruntled Nation though. (NS)

No address, see Disgruntled Nation 7" maybe

The Inner Swine Vol.6 #3

Poor writing and poor layout contribute to this issue of the I.S., which is basically Jeff Somer's ego typed out onto paper, plus some fiction, and some witty adult-type writing, like an interview with Mum-Ra (you know, to feel nostalgic n' shit) WACKY!

2934 Griffith St. #9, Jersey City, NJ 07307

The Inner Swine, Vol. 6, Issue #3

This is basically a zine written by some guy, about some guy. With some stories and rants by said guy. About 60 pages about some guy who I don't know and who I don't care about. Jeez, 60 pages. This is why I hate zines. Who is this for? Jeff's friends? Does he have any? Can't he share this stuff with them and spare other people the boredom? I guess not. (NS)

\$2, The Inner Swine, c/o Jeff Somers, 293 Griffith St. #9, Jersey City, NJ 07307

Life On A Bench #1

"This zine was created in an attempt to stave off insanity caused by boredom and close proximity to idiots. We guarantee nothing. This is our first attempt at making a zine." That seems like a good introduction. Basically, this is 2 girls/young women/femaliens making a first zine. Some

stories, some reviews, some rants, some personal stuff. Add that up, and you have a bunch of stuff. I was expecting more stories/recipes/articles about corn, since they're from Idaho. I think you should change your zine's name to "Cream Corn."

Just a friendly tip. (NS)

2 stamps, Life On A Bench, c/o Lux, 33921 Hwy 200 E., Sandpoint, ID 83864

Media Reader #2

A great effort from North Carolina chock full of fascinating interviews columns and reviews. The interviews are with Uncle Ralph Nader and John Stauber. Stauber is an Australian academic who writes "the twentieth century has been characterized by three developments of great political importance: the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy." I would say the above quote is a good point of reference for the entire zine. There is also a long nice column by Al Burian of Burn Collector fame. This is 24 pages with a color cover on news print. (MY)

Mediareader Pob 994, Chapel Hill NC, 27514

Megabeef, #5/Gooder than a Apple #1

I like the opening photo of the "bearded editor" (he has a beard) versus the "beer-dead editor" (he's passed out). Next is a story about being a sperm donor ("You heard me right. I get paid to choke it."), then a rant about rampant stupidity at UVA ("...Cocke Hall is at one end of the campus and Balz Dorm is located on a hill right below some woods"). There's a piece mocking the Promise Ring, which even a wimpy fan boy like me laughed at, and a funny look at his last job. Plus the requisite Nintendo retrospective. A really funny zine. (DAL)

\$1, PO Box 16281, Alexandria, VA 22302

Monozine #7

This review is late coming, the zine has been out for awhile now. Monozine is one of the better, risk takers out there. The best part about Monozine is that the authors are all sharing the kind of stories that you will tell to others. The theme revolves around being sick and injured. Everyone is encouraged to write in their stories that are thrown together without much layout or re-typing and sold as Monozine. There is always at least one story in every issue that will gross you out so much that you will not eat. Be prepared to flinch, and bite your teeth. Though I really loved the last issue, the rock issue, because of the connection of the author's to their music. This issue does not disappoint and I would try to get my hands on back issues as well. (EA)

Monozine PO Box 598 Reisterstown, MD 21136

Music Geek, Volume 1, Issue 1

New photocopy fanzine with a good punk rock vibe but not afraid to venture into unpunk territory written with a good dose of love for it all. Interviews with Mary Prankster, Minim, reviews, and a little more. (AS)
P.O. Box 84152, Phoenix, AZ 85071-4152

The Outskirts Of Life, By Cole Porter

This is a two story collection of noir pulp. These stories can be taken as dark humor or just plain disturbing. However, Cole Porter does create quite the image to go along with his stories. The two stories are "You Set My Soul On Fire" and "Mondo Window". "Soul" features a story of a drunk finding a new dark direction to pursue while "Window" is all about a neighbor who sees too much and embraces it. I don't want to give too much away, but for the price this is worth checking out if you have a fiending for a tale from the darkside. (DM)

\$1 or Trade Worldwide, Cathouse Press, PO Box 1421
Oshkosh, WI 54903

Pasazer #14

This super thick Polish zine has everything. If you know the language, you can read about Social Distortion, Dead Kennedy's, Bad Religion, Ramones, Buzzcocks, and other punk favorites. Pasazer has tons of reviews, and lots of columns. This edition comes with a compilation disc featuring over 15 bands. There's even a picture of a BEAUTIFUL polish girl naked towards the middle! Can someone get me a plane ticket fast! (BC)
Pasazer P.O. Box 42, 39-201 Debica 3 Poland.
Pasazer@mtnet.com.pl

The Plan #2

Goddamn this was sooo average. The Plan is a 40 page digest sized piece of shit with a heavy stock green cover. There is very little substance within. The writer writes mediocre stories about his uninteresting friends and their lame adventures. Good Lord!(MY)
\$1-Matt Cordell, The Plan 1459N. Bosworth Apt. 2f,
Chicago IL, 60622

Psycho #1 Fan

Lots of retro 80's stuff in here. A look into a diary during the 80's and tons of talk about bands and all that junk from that hair spray era. There is an interview with Janelle inside it also. The centerfold is of Donny Osmond. Yikes! (BC)
\$3 Psycho 1 Fan P.O. Box 143 Tucson, AZ. 85702

The Rheumatic Fever Zine #1

This 'zine started out promisingly enough with a nice story of a boy and his life-threatening disease, but quickly descended into the murky world of unknown straightedge bands and boring, borrowed tirades against the Gap, Starbucks, and SUVs in general. Yawn. I am

glad that you're feeling better, though, Mister Editor. Yay for modern medicine. Boo for bad hardcore. (CK)
\$?, Jesse Rosemore, PO Box 1115 Crestline, CA 92325

Sheblamo #12

Tales of beers, tattoos, and various punk rawk escapades abound in this pretty darn thick 'zine. It kind of makes you wish that you went to more places and had better friends than you actually do. However, the "I am sad because my life is sooooo boring" side effect is canceled out by the "I'm so happy that she can spell and form a nice sentence" factor. And she likes the Weakerthans! What a package deal. P.S. Be my friend. (CK)
\$1, Sheblamo, PO Box 931 Nevada City, CA 95959

Shit out of... #1

This zine is all about drugs, being punk, and having really bad luck. Shitty idea, but a very entertaining zine. I thought I would hate it, but it turned out to be a very good read. Do not expect to get anything out of this zine but a bunch of laughs. Stories about a crazy bum, taking acid, why legalizing weed is bad, and more. (RE)
Mike, 252 Grand Ave., Johnson City, NY 13790

Sore #10

A lot of personal essays from different writers make up this Virginian zine. Packed at the end with some decent music reviews. (BC)
\$1 Sore Zine P.O. Box 68711, Va. Beach, VA 23471

Sore # 10

Super bored kids with no lives sit in coffee shops attempting to figure out the meaning of life. This is a collection of short stories that are as aimless as they are pointless. 44 pages digest sized computer generated pretentious drivel. (MY)
Sore POB 6874, VA Beach,VA, 23471

Stay Free! #17

Perhaps you've seen this little magazine floating around your local Borders or Barnes and Nobles. In case you haven't, Stay Free is generally in the vein of AdBusters magazine in that the writers poke fun of and, at the same time, are horrified by, the culture of consumerism in this country. If you're thinking "What's wrong with advertising?" and "Capitalism is my friend," read this and have your eyes opened.
\$3.95 on newsstands, or contact Stay Free!, PO Box 306
Prince Street Station NY, NY 10012

Too Much Information #3

Don't ask me why some people think their lives are so interesting that they are compelled to write it all down and share it with the world. Laura, it's nice that you spent 40+ hours a week cleaning a hotel in Massachusetts last summer, but I really don't need a play-by-play on which rooms you cleaned and the fact that you got the dreaded 600s hallway again. A

short postcard would have been more effective. For example, "Spent summer cleaning hotel rooms. It blows. Love, Laura." (CK)
\$2 (yes, really), Laura, PO Box 915 Hyannis, MA 02601

Twat, #3

This is a short but spirited zine that tackles tough topics like menstruation, anal sex, breast size, and loneliness in a pretty funny, dare I say it, sassy way. There's a cool, consistent voice throughout the whole thing, and it's filled with well drawn, clever comics. (DAL)
No address given, e-mail is yeastie@hotmail.com

The Underground, #20

Man, I've lived in California most of my life, but I have no idea where Dinuba is. I've got to find it, though, because from the impression you get from The Underground, it's got the greatest scene in the world. This has got 4 solid pages of informative music news, interviews with Pod, Anguish Unsaid, and Prosper, and lots of reviews. A couple of rants about the government, too. (DAL)
366 West Nebraska, Dinuba, CA 93618

Urban Guerrilla #9

This zine has some nice interviews and nice pictures here and there, mostly covering the hardcore crust arena. There is an interesting interview with Flipper's Ted Falconi that sheds some light on their history, if you missed it the first time (which almost all of you did, and should care to catch it now). There's some record reviews, but we all know those are boring. I like the layout and how it's not incoherent cut & paste like everything else. (RB)
\$1.50, Ear 2 the Ground, PMB 419, Berkeley, CA 94709

The Zine Yearbook Volume 4

Jen Angel has done it again. Do you have time to read hundreds to thousands of zines each year? Probably, you haven't read as many as Jen has and she does a real good job at compiling 48 excerpts from 41 different zines from 1999. This mother is thick, 144 pages, and perfect bound so it will look good sitting on your shelf. The price may look steep, but this is a book in reality. In fact it is better than most books, because if you don't like one author you can easily go on to the next excerpt. The authors are too numerous to name, but the range of articles range from personal to political and are all over the map. This is a great piece of work that seems to be a yearly event. Pick yours up today. (EA)
\$7 Tree of Knowledge Distribution PO Box 251766, Little Rock, AR 72225

Send your zine in for review to:

Punk Planet Reviews

PO Box 6014 East Lansing, MI 438826

PAPER BOOKS

but you're also
person you see
ave to see

The Mistress Manual

Mistress Lorelei

Greenery Press

Although I make a point of supporting independent bookstores, I also take guilty pleasure in strolling down the aisles of those mega-bookstores. It's nice to get a sense of what America is being told to read. Plus there's a roominess to your average Barnes & Noble or Borders that makes for relaxing browsing. But what I like best about these literary supermarkets is the experience of finding what I wouldn't expect to find: small-press poetry chapbooks, a collection of essays on the late work of philosopher Michel Foucault, a steeply discounted novel in German on the remainder table. It's like finding a ripe, red tomato amid the washed-out wannabes in the Safeway produce aisle.

There's one section of these mega-bookstores where you find a lot of these juicy fruits (or are they vegetables?): the sex aisle. You may not realize this, but these monuments to corporate culture stock all manner of coital culture, from reissued Victorian erotic novels to highly specific guidebooks. I was recently reminded just how far Borders and Barnes & Noble will go when I spotted *The Mistress Manual* on the shelves of one. I had been sent a review copy a while back, but I was having a hard time putting it in perspective. Mind you, I did have plenty to say about it. Even if your sexual inclinations don't tend towards being a dominant

female or submissive male, there's still a lot to like about a book that combines detailed instructions for the "woman-in-charge" with savvy critical asides like this discourse on domestic duties: "Having someone else do the housework—thoroughly, perfectly, at your command, while you relax and buff your nails—is such a common female fantasy that it's not even kinky."

Mistress Lorelei's sense of humor adds to the bargain. Consider some of the possible scenarios she lists for the "amazon" to act out with a male slave: "a female pirate terrorizing a prisoner of war's potential as a sexual plaything; a pagan ruler evaluating a prisoner of war's potential as a sexual plaything; Catherine the Great of Russia doing ditto; a cowgirl roping an obnoxious male colleague and taking him down a peg; an Indian princess taking revenge on an exploitive white settler; a female revolutionary tormenting her male hostage (naturally, he's a spoiled member of the corrupt ruling party." That last idea had me laughing out loud. But as much enjoyment as the book gave me in the details, I found the experience of reading it unsettling. Despite *The Mistress Manual's* discussion of anal play, corporal punishment, and water sports, it still seemed a little too safe.

And then, standing in the middle of that mega-bookstore, it struck me. As my gaze swept the room, I saw a sea of yellow volumes in the "For Dummies" series.

On the shelf in front of me, I saw how-to book after how-to book, covering everything from the finer points of massaging your lover with truffle-infused olive oil to bondage and domination. *The Mistress Manual* was the most serious title in this category, sufficiently explicit to scare the carefully concealed butt-plug and tit-clamps off all those self-righteous people who project their own self-loathing onto the outside world. But there it was, for sale to any suburban consumer.

It makes you wonder. I'm starting to think that the how-to format is capable of sanitizing any topic, though necrophilia and NAMBLA "pedagogy" would present difficulties. I should point out that *The Mistress Manual* is a revised and expanded edition of a book that fell out of print years ago. Although it may seem like nothing positive has happened during the Clinton era, the mere fact that this book has lost the aura of the forbidden indicates that we've come farther than we think—and with a stained blue dress to show for it. My point is that, even if *The Mistress Manual* doesn't strike me or the buyers at those mega-bookstores as being particularly daring, its peaceful co-existence with coffee-table books and computer manuals might be a good thing. If nothing else, it will surely prove handy to people who wish to put their bottom through a rigorous work-out. —Charlie Bertsch

Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the Pedagogy of Revolution

Peter McLaren
Rowan & Littlefield

When Neil Young wrote that "it's better to burn out, than to fade away," he was talking about rock stars. But he could just as easily have been talking about revolutionaries. It's a rare radical who is able to make the transition from outsider to insider without losing a lot of luster. The solution, it seems, is to die before your time. That's what Che Guevara did and his reputation profited enormously by it. But we're a long way from the 1960s now. And, even though Che's status as a revolutionary icon has demonstrated surprising resilience, the work he did before dying has largely disappeared from view. McLaren's book seeks to rectify this problem by reminding us why Che became an icon in the first place.

Rather than focus on Che alone, McLaren compares him to another revolutionary who came to prominence in the 1960s, the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. In his discussion of Freire's "pedagogy of the oppressed," McLaren is on familiar territory, picking up where his previous books on radical teaching left off. What sets this book apart is its revolutionary turn. McLaren has always been a diehard leftist, insisting that the highbrow ideas of the academy be disseminated into the K-12 classrooms where the war against conservative "common sense" descends into the trenches. But he has also been one of the leading advocates for a "post-modern pedagogy" that breaks with the radical politics of the past in order to highlight problems of identity, particularly

those rooted in race, gender, and sexual preference.

With *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the Pedagogy of Revolution*, however, McLaren seeks to reconnect with the revolutionary nationalism that Che's work exemplified. Without fully disowning his earlier positions, McLaren makes it clear that Che's Third World Marxism displays renewed relevance for the post-Seattle left. Yes, it can be maddeningly single-minded and sometimes downright simple-minded. But, in the right hands, it has the power to reveal the big picture when postmodernism can only show us little ones. Or, to be more precise, it provides us with a way of fitting all those little pictures together.

Significantly, McLaren refuses to distinguish between Che, the military leader, and Che, the teacher:

What does Che's pedagogy teach us about how to respond to developments in global capitalism? The first answer to this question is that Che does not see globalization as a natural phenomenon. It should not be accepted as a necessary occurrence . . . The second answer is that Che does not see globalization or capitalism as a process that bespeaks an internal logic that is necessarily self-perpetuating. Che views 'subjectivity' as the determining factor in globalization, and the struggle against capitalism in essence becomes the struggle to create resistant subjectivities through ideology critique and counterhegemonic practice . . . The third answer to this question is that Che links globalization to practices of imperialism that must be eradicated through class struggle.

As the passage above amply demonstrates, McLaren does not make it easy on

his readers. For the most part, he seems to presume that they are professors like himself. On the surface, it may seem like a curious move.

Although both Che and Paulo Freire were well-educated, they took pains to translate their message for people who were not. So why does McLaren write at such a high level? I imagine it's because he wants to reach the teachers who teach the teachers. To write too simply would be to risk losing their attention. But they have enormous power to influence the direction of society over time. The image of a small rock tossed into a pond is an apt one, for the ripples these teachers of pedagogy send out will travel very far indeed. Should you bother reading the book yourself? I think it depends on how much time and education you have. There's a lot to learn here. And, for all of its difficulty, McLaren's language does have moments of transcendent beauty. These sentences from his conclusion are a perfect example:

At the moment of our birth we receive a ticket to Death. No reservations are necessary and our destination is assured. What remains open to fortune is what we choose along the way. Che and Freire both understood that we can rail against our fate but we cannot injure eternity. They chose not to mourn destiny but to celebrate the journey of life.

This sense of celebration is one thing that comes through loud and clear, no matter how many multi-syllabic words McLaren deploys. Revolution is deadly serious. But it can also be heavenly fun.

—Charlie Bertsch

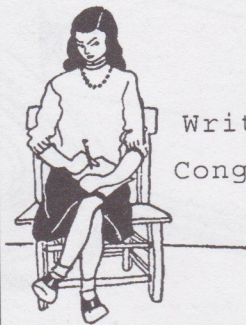
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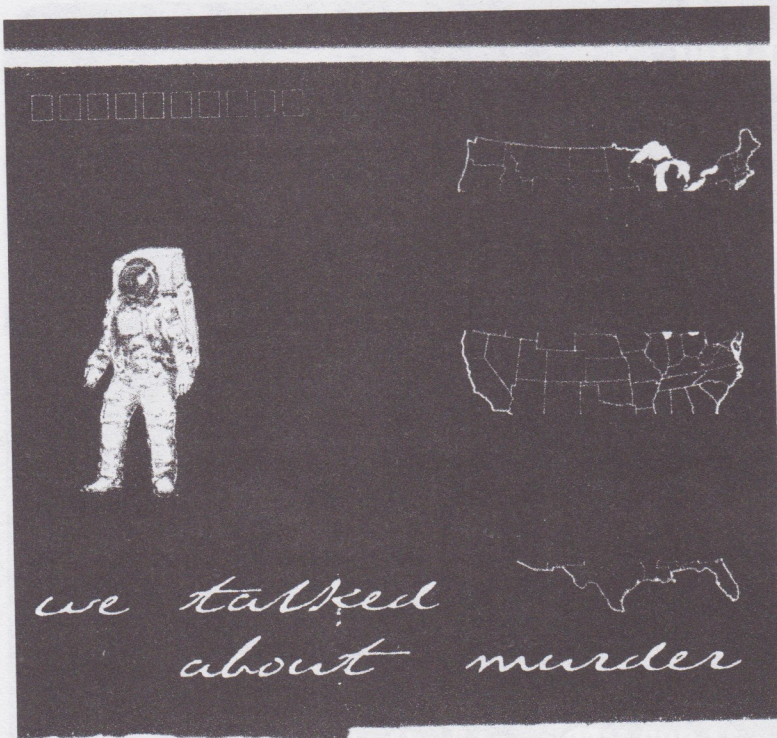
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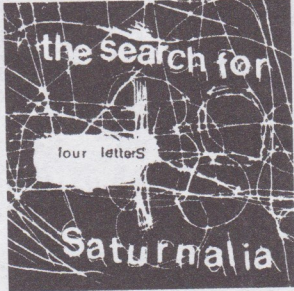


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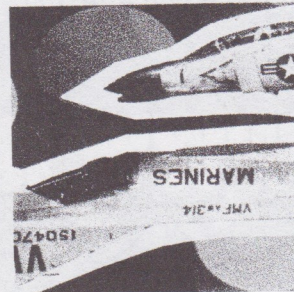
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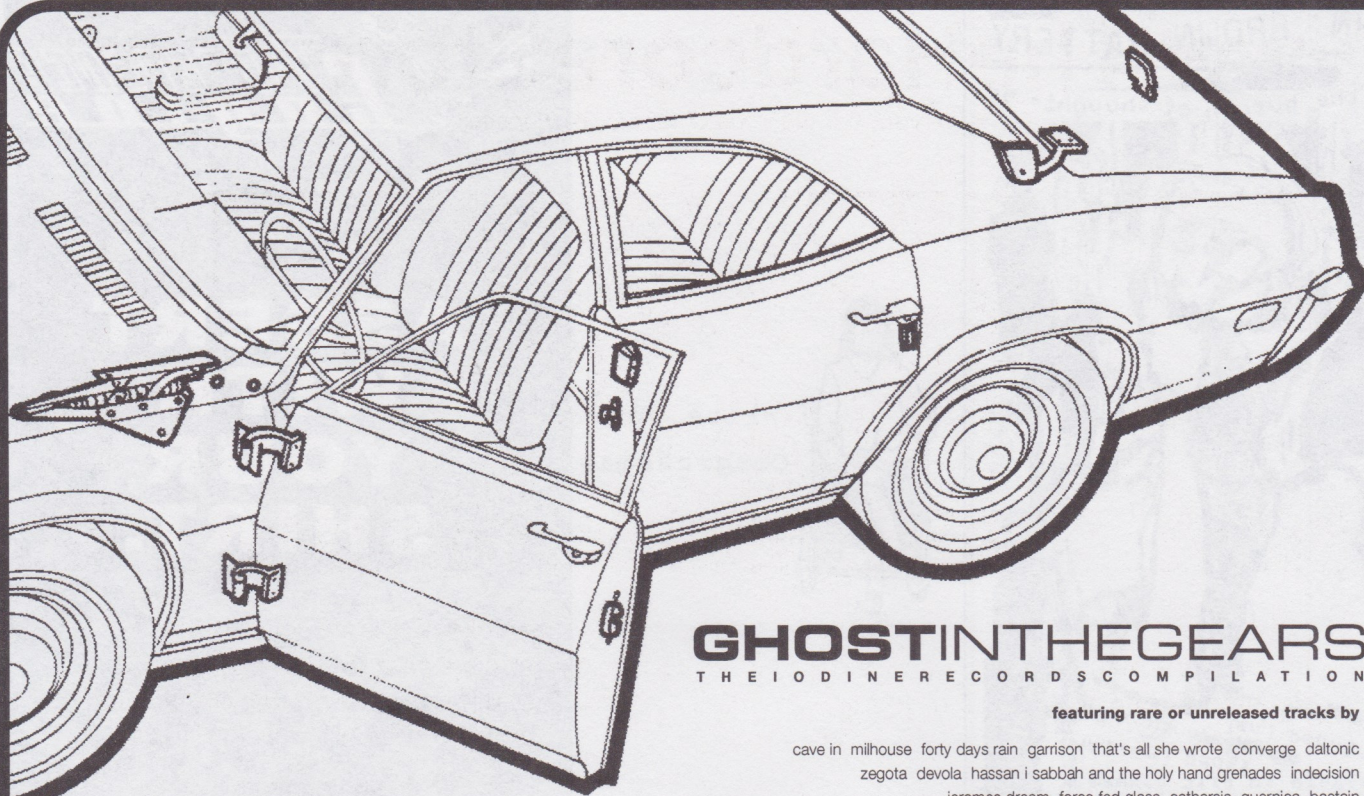


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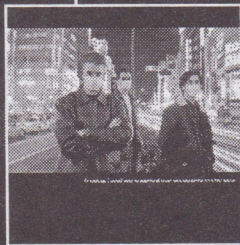
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frodus

After 6 years, 500+ shows, 5 US tours, 2 European tours, Japan, The Refused, & many nights of sheer chaos; DC legends Frodus embarked on their last manifesto & composed an album that will revolutionize the ever preconceived notion of the lines between HC/Punk/Emo/Indie/Pre/Post/Whatever... it is just epic. Recorded & produced by Brian McTernan (Cave In, the Explosion, Snapcase, Milemarker)



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Robbie Huddleston of Ann Beretta went into the studio inspired by Tom Wait's "Closing Time" with nine new songs. The first tracks were acoustic guitar & vocals. The rest is history. A celebration from the heart with help from good friends. Original artwork by Alison of Discount.



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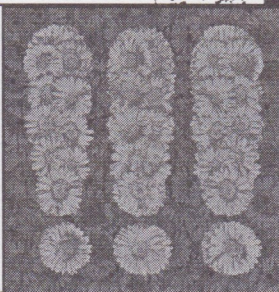
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!!! "!!!" LP/CD

!!! (pronounce it "CHIK CHIK CHIK" or "POW POW POW") was formed in 1996 at a Sacramento, CA dance party. This is their debut full-length release. "!!!" recalls the finer moments of THE CLASH (circa "Black Market"), A CERTAIN RATIO, JAMES BROWN, THE METERS, LIQUID LIQUID, CHIC, PIGBAG, and others... but it's probably accidental. Which is not to say !!! are a punk band, nor a funk band for that matter. They are both. And neither. !!! shares 3 members with OUTHUD, who recently signed to Kranky.



OHEV

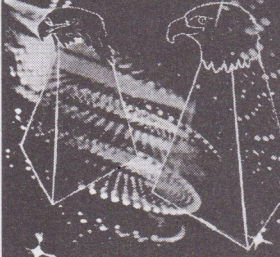


THE ROCKING HORSE WINNER

"State of Feeling Concentration" CD

THE ROCKING HORSE WINNER debut full-length CD, "State of Feeling Concentration", is promised to be the best indie-pop CD you will buy this year. From upbeat tempos in the likes of JIMMY EAT WORLD, THE SMASHING PUMPKINS ("Gish"-era) and THE SEA AND CAKE, to the catchiness of influences by THE BEATLES, Jolie's vocal style can be compared to, yet surpasses that of, LISA LOEB or THE SUNDAYS. THE ROCKING HORSE WINNER is destined to make it big.

THE CONVOCAION OF...



THE CONVOCAION OF...

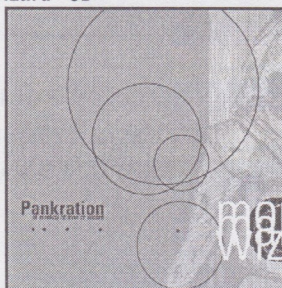
Self-titled LP/CD

THE CONVOCAION OF... are an enlightened, threatening new kind of rock n' roll. Their debut album is 8-tracks (including re-workings of those found on their "LAB Remixes" 12") of mechanized guitar- and bass-driven mayhem from guru Tonie Joy. Hailing from Baltimore, MD, THE CONVOCAION OF... features former members of such seminal bands as MOSS ICON, UNIVERSAL ORDER OF ARMAGEDDON, GREAT UNRAVELING, BORN AGAINST, and BEHIND CLOSED DOORS. Vinyl includes a full-color gatefold jacket you don't wanna miss. On tour everywhere.

GEL

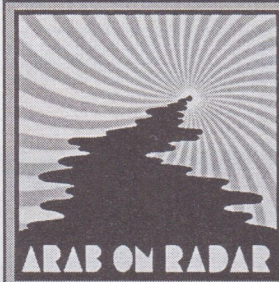
PANKRATION "Of Monkey Of Man Of Wizard" CD

PANKRATION have created a fucking monster! This is one heavy as hell record! There is no way to describe the brutal and uncompromising, yet starkly beautiful music on "Of Monkey Of Man Of Wizard". Influenced by the sounds of HIS HERO IS GONE, cliff Burton-era METALLICA, AT THE GATES, CRADLE OF FILTH w/ a little Enemy of the Sun-era NEUROSIS thrown in. This record leaps and bounds ahead of what any of the metal influenced hardcore acts are spitting out these days. They have had previous releases on Donut Friends, including a long out of print debut 7" and a recent split with RED SCARE. They toured this past Summer with RED SCARE and PARTY OF HELICOPTERS in support of this new CD.



ARAB ON RADAR "Soak the Saddle" LP/CD

ARAB ON RADAR is a unique and unprecedented brand of psycho-neurological terrorism. The release of this album, "Soak the Saddle" marks the most MONUMENTOUS strike to date in a series of assaults upon planet earth. ARAB ON RADAR perform frenzied ablutinary music. the compositions disrupt the model functions of the human brain. Unwitting victims have experienced SEIZURES and UNCONTROLLABLE URINATION. "Soak the Saddle" is said to be the "MOST DARING AND EXCITING RECORD EVER MADE." Their music is a sonic assault. Powerful and cathartic, often termed NO WAVE by those who are at a loss of words, it is unlike anything you've ever heard!



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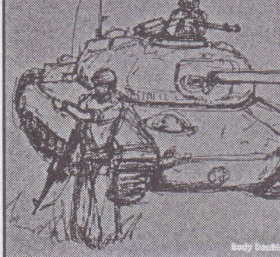
THE MAN I FELL IN LOVE WITH "Dis Yourself" LP



This record was recorded over 3 years ago right on the verge of pop music consuming hardcore and was set to be released on the since-collapsed Keystone (Lumberjack) label. After years of hunting we finally tracked down a copy so the rest of the world can hear what a masterpiece it is! Ex-members of HARRIET THE SPY and current members of the PARTY OF HELICOPTERS team up to create a beautiful vocal-driven pop record in the vein of MY BLOODY VALENTINE and CHAPTER HOUSE (yet still having a sound all its own). The dreamy vocals, driving melodic bass, rhythmic drums and sparse delayed-out guitar lines will surely win over the heart of every post-punk boy and girl in America!

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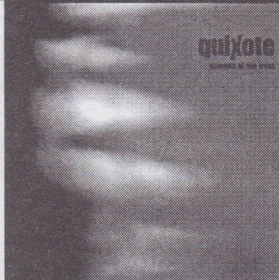
THE PARTY OF HELICOPTERS "The First Two Years of Conquering the Tundra" 12" EP

Hot on the heels of the group's 2nd album "Mt. Forever" (available on LP through Donut Friends via IMD, and on CD by Troubleman Unlimited) comes the suitably epic companion piece. "The First Two Years of Conquering the Tundra" is one 17-minute rock & roll slam from these Kent, OH living room arena rock gods (feat. members past and present of HARRIET THE SPY, THE MAN I FELL IN LOVE WITH, and "NEW" TERROR CLASS) broken down into three massive sections. The POH's music merits comparisons to "Metal Circus"-era HUSKER DU and DINOSAUR before they had to add the "Jr.", these new recordings venture out into territory explored by bands like UNWOUND and NEW ORDER. Limited edition, one-time pressing of 1200 copies.



QUIXOTE "Protests of the Weak" LP/CD

Brand new 9 song masterpiece from this unique Kalamazoo, Michigan trio. QUIXOTE combines power, melody, dissonance, and driving rhythms to create one of the best releases of the year. Hints of HUSKER DU, DRIVE LIKE JEHU, and GIANT'S CHAIR sneak in throughout while QUIXOTE proves to the listener how much they have mastered their craft on this release. "Protests of the Weak" rises to the top, leaving all those stagnant independant releases of late whimpering for even an ounce of originality. LP features 220 gram vinyl and Direct Metal mastering.



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VICTORY IN A NICARAGUAN SWEATSHOP. Plus an expanded DIY section, columns, reviews and much much more. 136 pgs.

PP31 features a talk with FUGAZI and DISCHORD RECORDS frontman IAN MACKAYE. Also interviewed in this issue is THE AVENGERS' PENELOPE HUSTON. Additionally, there are talks with TED LEO, ICU, LIFTER PULLER, and DÁLEK. Punk Planet #31 also looks at the DEAD KENNEDY'S LAWSUIT—this article sheds light on the bizarre situation that has arisen to pit former bandmates against each other. PP31 also takes a look at THE POSSIBLE CLOSING OF GILMAN STREET, MAIL ORDER BRIDES FROM RUSSIA and LIVING WITH CHRONIC CYSTITIS. Plus, columns, reviews, DIY and much much more 136 pgs.

PP32 takes a personal look at the Kosovo Crisis. A moving, troubling and angering piece, LIFE DURING WARTIME: LETTERS FROM THE KOSOVO CRISIS will not allow you to look at the news the same way. In addition to these gripping letters, PP32 also features an interview with K RECORDS' CALVIN JOHNSON. Also interviewed in PP32 are NEUROSIS, ORI, MURDER CAN BE FUN FANZINE's John Marr, THE ETERNALZ, ASPHODEL RECORDS, SUBMISSION HOLD, and eclectic art mailorder CATCH OF THE DAY MAILORDER. In addition to all these interviews, Punk Planet #32 features articles the COMMUNITY RADIO MOVEMENT IN WASHINGTON DC; MULTIETHNICITIES IN MODERN CULTURE; and a revealing look at GENTRIFICATION IN TODAY'S URBAN AMERICA. Plus much, much more. 144pgs

PP33 Sept./Oct. 1999 takes a peek at the GROWING HACKTIVIST MOVEMENT. Hacktivism has brought civil disobedience to the Internet. Also in this issue, filmmaker JEM COHEN TALKS ABOUT MAKING INSTRUMENT, the FUGAZI DOCUMENTARY. In addition, PP33 features interviews with JADE TREE RECORDS, THE MELVINS, OLD TIME RELIQUIN, ALKALINE TRIO AND EUPHONIE. Articles in this issue include "Growing Freedom," A LOOK AT A COMMUNI-

TY-BASED FARM IN INNER-CITY WASHINGTON DC; "Ghosts of Tiananmen," AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT TIENANMEN SQUARE 10 YEARS AFTER THE CHINESE UPRISING THERE; "Broken Vows" A COMPELLING ARGUMENT AGAINST MARRIAGE; and "A WITCH HUNT IN PUERTO RICAN CHICAGO," a gripping look at the government's persecution of Chicago's Puerto Rican community. Plus much more! 144pgs.

PP34 Nov/Dec 1999 takes an in-depth look at THE WARPED TOUR. PP exposes the inner workings and hypocrisy of the so-called "punk rock summer camp." Also in this issue, Punk Planet sits down with WCW WRESTLER VAMPIRO, MANS RUIN RECORDS' KOZIK, SONIC YOUTH'S THURSTON MOORE, THE REPLICANTS, CADILLACA, OPERATION IVY'S JESSE MICHAELS and PEDRO THE LION. Articles in PP34 include a look at WOMEN IN THE ZAPATISTA MOVEMENT, a very moving LETTER FROM PALESTINE, the case against GENETICALLY ALTERED FOOD, and a look at DIY PORN ON THE INTERNET. Plus much, much more—except for reviews, which were missing from this issue. Whoops! But hey, it's still a great read at 136 pgs.

PP35 Jan/Feb 2000 the ALL INTERVIEWS ISSUE. Headlining this special issue is a rare talk with JOE STRUMMER, the frontman of punk legends THE CLASH. Also featured in this issue, is a rare talk with LUNGFISH. Also in the all-interviews issue, talks with THE NEED, AMERICAN STEEL MERGE, the LEFT BUSINESS OBSERVER'S DOUG HENWOOD, the MR. T EXPERIENCE'S DR. FRANK, the mastermind behind BIG WHEEL RECREATION RECORDS, POSITIVE FORCE DC's MARK ANDERSON and much, much more. 152pgs

PP36 March/April 2000 Punk Planet #36 takes a long, hard look at THE DEATH OF A PUNK IN AMARILLO TEXAS. Punk Planet writer Chris Ziegler travels to Amarillo, talks to the people involved and writes about the case and its aftermath. Also in PP36 is the story of the WTO PROTESTS in words & pictures. In addition to these two feature stories, PP36 features interviews with

MATADOR RECORDS, THE COUP, AK PRESS, DENNIS COOPER, AT THE DRIVE IN, TAPE OP MAGAZINE, LIMP-WRIST and SARGE's ELIZABETH ELMORE, and many more. Articles in PP36 include moving PORTRAITS FROM IRAQ and a look at the LUTHER PLACE SHELTER, a shelter for homeless women in Washington DC. Plus there are columns, DIY, reviews and much, much more. 144 pgs

PP37 May/June 2000 CRIME AND JUSTICE 2000. In three articles, PP37 takes a look at the sorry state of the American criminal justice system. POLICE BRUTALITY is looked at in the article "War in the Streets." YOUTH ORGANIZING AROUND PROPOSITION 21 is investigated in "No Power like the Youth" and the PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX is exposed in "Crisis and Control." Interviews in this issue include STELLA MARRS; J-CHURCH'S LANCE HAHN; STEPHEN DUNCOMBE, author of ZINES and the POLITICS OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURE; the EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE; O AND NOT U; EXHUMED FILMS; HORACE PINKER; and the story of STALAG 13, a Philadelphia-based punk club that was shut down by the city, fought to be reopened and won. Finally, PP37 takes a look at the SAD STATE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE and PP takes a peek at the lawsuit between the RECORDING INDUSTRY OF AMERICA AND MP3.COM. Plus more. 144 pgs.

PP38 July/August 2000 VOICES OF THE NEW LEFT. PP takes a look at the new anti-globalism movement. Interviewed in the "Voices" series are NOAM CHOMSKY, JELLO BIAFRA, DIRECT ACTION NETWORK, RUCKUS SOCIETY, QUEER TO THE LEFT and GLOBAL EXCHANGE. Also interviewed in this issue, BOY SETS FIRE, UNWOUND talk about building their new recording studio, post-hardcore label HYDRAHEAD RECORDS, controversial publisher SOFT SKULL BOOKS, MELVINS bassist Joe Preston talks about his project THE THRONES, electronic artist LESSER checks in and art rockers LES SAVY FAV yap at you. Also, PP38 takes a look at the growing RAPTIVIST movement. Additionally, PP38 looks at the GROWING ANTI-WALMART MOVEMENT. Much more. 156 pgs.

PP39 Sept/Oct 2000 Looks back at the PUNK SIGNING BOOM OF THE MID-'90s in the article "The Crash." Six years after punk "broke" into the mainstream, Punk Planet talks to many of the bands involved, GREEN DAY, JAWBREAKER, JAWBOX, SAMIAM, GIRLS AGAINST BOYS, THE SMOKING POPES, FACE TO FACE, JIMMY EAT WORLD, TEXAS IS THE REASON and more, to learn their stories. Think you know what happened? Think again. Also in this issue: interviews with KILL ROCK STARS founder SLIM MOON; THE EXPLOSION; MARY TIMONY; SUE COE; ULTRA-RED; the mastermind behind the website DISINFO.COM; and the woman behind the CENTRAL OHIO ABORTION ACCESS FUND. Articles in this issue (beyond the massive cover story) include a look at how groups like the WTO ARE EFFECTING THE LIVES OF THE GREAT APES; a report on the CHICAGO POST-ROCK SCENE; and economist Doug Henwood writes "BOOM FOR WHOM" which puts a new perspective on the "new" economy. 152 pgs

PP40 November/December 2000. MEET THE NEW BOSS Through talks with authors JH Hatfield (author of the controversial George W Bush biography Fortunate Son) and Jeffrey St. Clair (co-author of Al Gore: A Users Guide), Punk Planet helps you envision the hell that the Bush presidency will be—and the hell that a Gore presidency would have been. PP40 also features interviews with INSOUND.COM; Champs mastermind and ex-Nation of Ulysees pioneer TIM GREEN; the folks at ELECTRICAL AUDIO; Anarchist theorist JOHN ZERZAN; rap collectivist MARCELLE DIALLO; VERSO BOOKS; MILEMARKER; and noise-rockers MATMOS. Articles in PP40 include a look at the WAR THE GOVERNMENT IS WAGING AGAINST THE NAVAJO INDIANS in Big Mountain, AZ, the PLIGHT OF C NUMBER PRISONERS IN ILLINOIS and a look back at WELFARE REFORM. 152 pgs.

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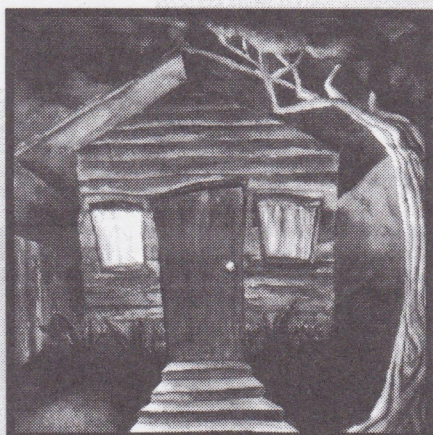
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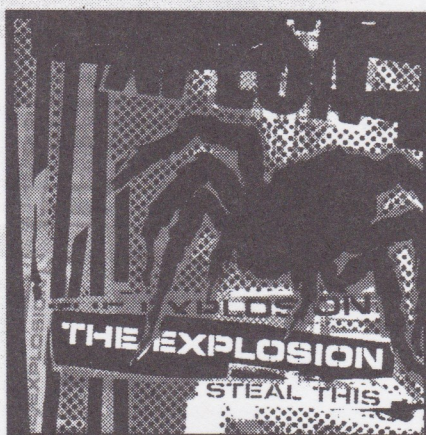
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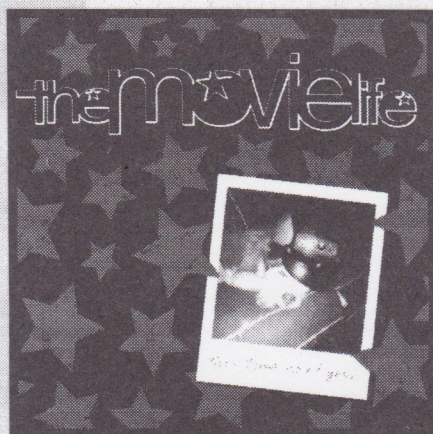
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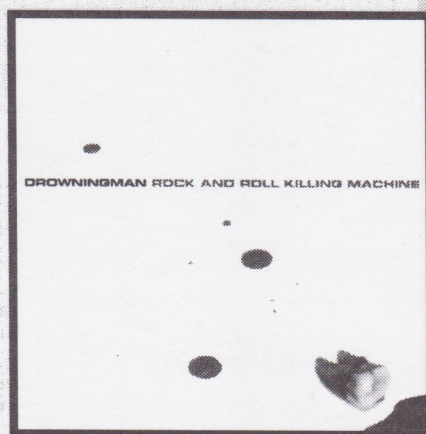
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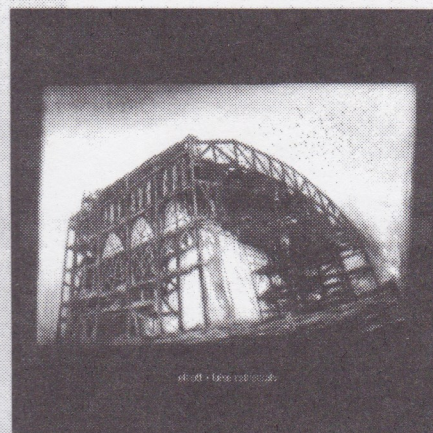
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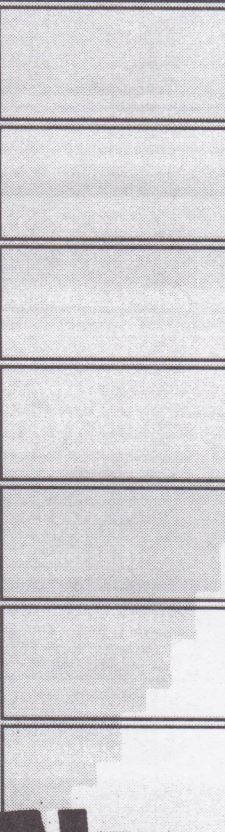
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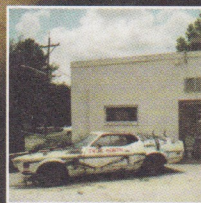
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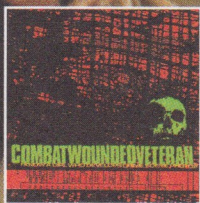
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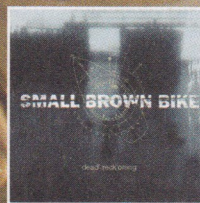
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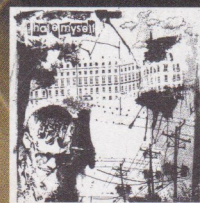
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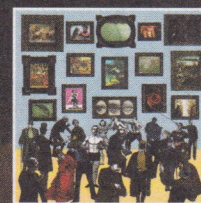
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